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# HISTORIC GROTON





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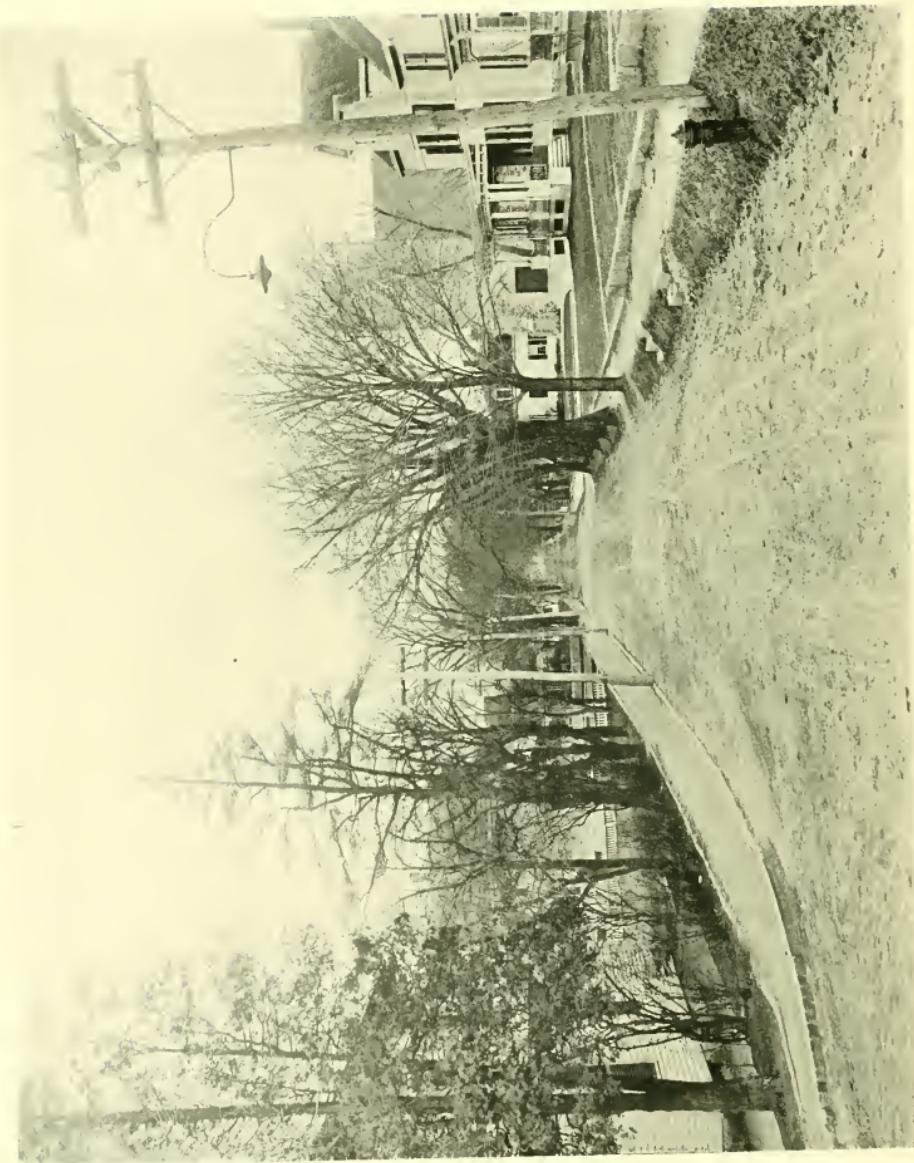
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MONUMENT STREET, GROTON

# HISTORIC GROTON

COMPRISING

## HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

PERTAINING TO

GROTON HEIGHTS, CENTER GROTON, POQUONNOC  
BRIDGE, NOANK, MYSTIC AND  
OLD MYSTIC, CONN.

BY LOCAL WRITERS

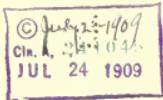
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## Groton Heights, or the Borough of Groton

By MARY E. DENISON

 ROTON HEIGHTS or Borough is beautifully situated on the river Thames, directly opposite New London, Connecticut, with which it is connected by a ferry and also by a drawbridge over which go many trains daily.

One crossing the river to Groton sees the village spread out before him along the banks of the river and upon the hills above. There, upon the summit, is the tall shaft of the monument which commemorates that memorable day, Sept. 6, 1781, on which the brave men of Groton and vicinity fought for home and country in the old fort, whose ramparts lie just at the south. Close to the monument is the house used for their meetings, and recently enlarged by the Anna Warner Bailey Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, full of interesting relics. Near by stands the school house, where the children should early learn love of honor and of country as they hear about the heroic Ledyard and his valiant followers who, caring more for honor than for life, pierced with many a wound, fell "Dead on the Field of Glory."

North of the school house is our beautiful library to which the school boys, more often than not of foreign birth, come to see the sword of Col. Ledyard or to get a "Story of the Revolution." Here is a fine collection of about five thousand books free to any who may care to read. A little distance north of the library may be seen the tower of the fine new Congregational church, which ancient organization suffered so at the time of the massacre. Still farther to the north is the Baptist church, the second edifice of the society.

Just at the foot of the hill on which the Baptist church is set is the old house in which lived the famous "Mother Bailey" after whom the local chapter of the D. A. R. is named. A few rods north of the "Mother Bailey" house stands what is left of the old Congregational church built in 1834, the third building of that society, to which "Mother Bailey" would never come, preferring to walk out to the old "black meeting house," about a mile away, where she would listen to the robins as they sang and hear the frogs croak.

The pilgrim upon reaching Groton finds himself in the business part of the village, near the stores and post office. He probably sees the trolley, for this is the terminus of the Groton and Westerly line. Turning to the south he goes but a short distance before reaching the Ebenezer Avery house, now marked by a tablet, to which the wounded were taken after the battle. At the foot of Fort street is the Episcopal church. By this street one can go directly into the fort and then visit the points of interest which he has already seen from the river.

The town of Groton of which the borough is a part lies between the Thames and Mystic rivers and originally extended from Groton Long Point to the Preston line, until North Groton, now Ledyard, separated in 1836, making a large town by itself. Groton now includes the Borough, Center Groton, Poquonock Bridge, Noank and Mystic. The town is diversified by high hills, deep valleys, and wide plains. Over these once roamed the red man, the fierce Pequot, until Capt. Mason and his followers on May 26, 1637 "in order to have justice on the Indian," took and destroyed the

*HISTORIC GROTON*

stronghold of their chief Sassacus on Pequot Hill and ended the Pequot power in the colony. This slaughter of the Pequots, who were so hostile to the English, took place before there were any settlements nearer than the Connecticut river. In 1644 the General Court of Massachusetts gave John Winthrop, the younger, a grant of land in the Pequot country and in 1646 he founded New London, of which Groton was a part, being called the "East Side."

posite the eastern spur of Winthrop's Neck where was his home lot." With the advice and consent of Mr. Winthrop a grant of land lying north of his was given in 1655 or '56 to Thomas Bayley, who soon settled here and became a farmer. Other early settlers in that vicinity were the Starrs, Colvers, Lesters and Buddingtons. It is not easy to find who had land at that early date in what is now our borough, but Capt. Samuel Chester, who located in New London about 1663, had a grant



GROTON, LOOKING NORTH FROM THE MONUMENT

The land on the west of the river was first portioned out to the settlers for their home lots, then that on the east for farming. The broad plains of Poquonock were early taken for this purpose. Winthrop had a farm there, and among those who had farms and settled there as early as 1656 were James Morgan and James Avery, both men of note in the community. The house of the latter, the original "Hive of the Averys," stood until July, 1894, when it was burned by a spark from a locomotive.

Winthrop's grant on Groton Bank was "op-

of land given him in Groton where Fort Griswold and the monument now stand.

The first house on Groton Bank was that belonging to Cary Latham, who had leased the ferry for fifty years from March 25, 1655. At his death in 1685 he was succeeded by his son-in-law, John Williams, of whom Joshua Hempstead's diary says: "He kept the ferry when Groton and New London were one town, had but one minister and one captain's company." The ferryboat then was a scow with both sails and oars.

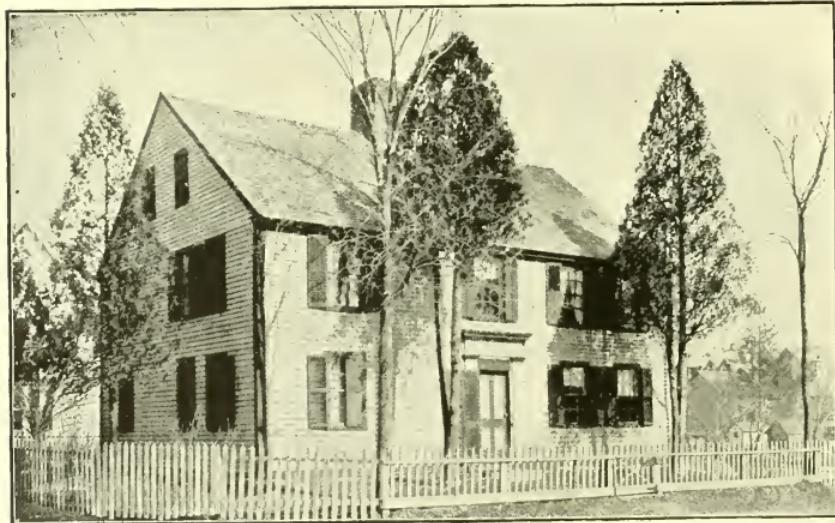


THE GROTON MONUMENT

Grants of land had early been taken in Poquonock and Mystic and in order to connect the scattered farms on the east side with New London a highway following the old Indian trail from Groton Bank to Mystic River was laid out in 1652, but beyond Fort Hill, it was a mere pentway until 1709. When King Philip's war broke out in 1675 the men of Groton volunteered to fight against the foe. They with a remnant of the Pequots, were led by Capt. James Avery.

The settlers upon the east side crossed the

travelled to Hartford to the General Court to bring this about. In 1702 permission was given them to build a meeting house thirty-five feet square, to organize a church and to hire a minister at the joint expense of the east and west sides of the town. In 1703 the house was built at Center Groton, the most central location. Rev. Ephraim Woodbridge was the first pastor. Two years later the East Side became a separate township and was called Groton, in honor of Gov. Winthrop's home in England.



THE EBENEZER AVERY HOUSE

Where wounded Americans were left at the Battle of Groton Heights

river to attend church and were taxed for its support. Many of them had long distances to go and in 1687 it was ordered that for the future they might invite the minister of the town to preach on their side of the river every third Sunday during the four most disagreeable months of the year. About the year 1700 the people began to ask first for a church organization of their own and then for a separate township. Capt. James Avery, who was a loyal supporter of the church in New London,

In the division of Groton, children were to have the privilege of the schools on the west side; the public ministerial lands were to be in common, while New London was to be allowed to cut masts for ships from the Pine Swamp of Groton. The story of our first town clerk, John Davie, reads like a romance. He, like his neighbors, was a farmer, but a well educated man, a graduate of Harvard, and of a good old family. One day in 1707 while hoeing in his field a messen-

ger appeared who saluted him as "Sir John Davie." Upon his departure for England to enter into possession of his vast estates, he left money for a handsome communion cup for Mr. Woodbridge's church. The cup bears this inscription: "The gift of Sir John Davie to the Church of Christ at Groton."

One of the early deacons of the church was John Seabury, whose grandson, born in North Groton, was that Samuel Seabury who was the first bishop of Connecticut and of the Episcopal church in the United States. When Whitefield came to New England, Rev. Jonathan Barber, who was then pastor of the church, being his devoted friend, invited him to visit Center Groton. He came first in Feb., 1763, and preached in the old meeting house and again in June of that year he preached to a multitude in front of Mr. Barber's house.

In about 1765 a new meeting house was built on Groton Bank on the old highway a mile from the ferry. This house is sometimes spoken of as the old "black meeting house," from the fact that it was never painted and then again as the "Kinne meeting house," from the Rev. Aaron Kinne, the pastor at the time it was built, and during the Revolution.



TROLLEY TERMINUS

Shipbuilding was one of the town's earliest industries. Thomas Starr of Groton Bank, a shipwright, in 1710 sold a sloop called the "Sea Flower" which he describes as "a square-sterned vessel of sixty-seven tons and six-sevenths of a ton, built by me in Groton." Our village became famous for the building of immense ships way back in 1725. About that time a ship builder, Capt. John Jeffrey,

came to Groton Bank and obtained a grant of land upon the river. Here he built two large ships, one of these being as large for her day as the big steamers lately built here. It was the largest ship that had then been constructed this side the Atlantic. This great ship of seven hundred tons was launched Oct. 12, 1725. A crowd of people came to the launching. The other ship of five hundred and seventy tons

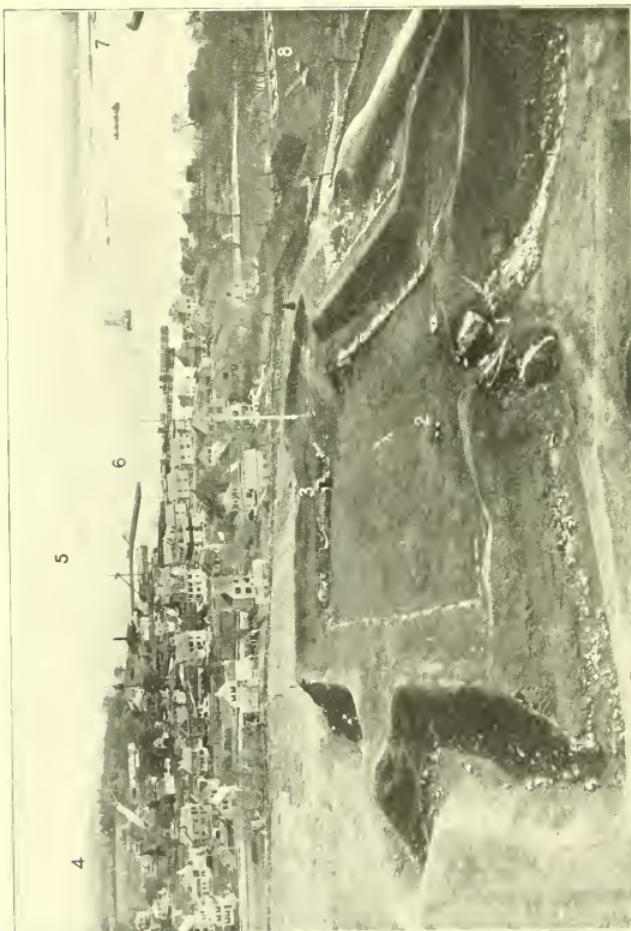


GROTON FERRY

was called the Don Carlos and sailed for Lisbon.

Jeffrey was the builder of smaller ships as well; Oct. 26, 1738, John Ledyard, the father of John Ledyard "the traveler," sailed for England in a new Snow built by Capt. Jeffrey. John Ledyard, called "the traveler," was one of Groton's noted men. He sailed with Capt. Cook on his second voyage around the world, of which he published an account. Later he penetrated into the heart of Russia. He next became one of a party to explore the Nile, but was taken sick and died at Cairo in 1788, aged thirty-seven.

The inhabitants, who were at first farmers, were now to a great extent a seafaring people, carrying on trade along the coast and with the West Indies and European ports until the Revolution put an end to all such traffic. Some of Groton's adventurous ones, as well as the men of New London, fitted out privateers and sent them out to damage the British ships which were harrying our coasts. They returned often with great prizes. Eight hundred and three recorded prizes were brought

*HISTORIC GROTON*

VIEW FROM SOUTH WINDOW OF MUNIMENT  
No. 1, Entrance to old Fort; No. 2, Where Colored Ledyard fell; No. 3, Entrance to Fort from Rifle Pt.; No. 4, Where the British landed; No. 5, Where the British who invaded New London landed; No. 6, New London Harbor; No. 7, Fort Trumbull; No. 8, New battery

into this harbor during the war. It is little wonder that the British were anxious to get possession of this stronghold of rebels.

Groton was settled by men and women who took an interest in education, believed in civil and religious freedom, and those who succeeded them were filled with the same spirit. They were justly indignant at every measure adopted by Great Britain to curtail independence of thought and action among the colonies. This town, like many another, declared war for itself against George III of England. A bold and patriotic spirit animated their town meetings. Foremost in their plans was Silas Deane of North Groton, until the Colonial Legislature sent him to the Continental Congress, by which he was later appointed ambassador to France. Other leading men were the Averys, the Starrs, the Chesters, the Ledyards—William, Ebenezer and Youngs—and Thos. Mumford, who was one of the most efficient of the "Sons of Liberty."

Mr. Mumford, with eleven other men of Connecticut in April, 1775, formed the project

in other places, a man whom Mr. Trumbull trusted. In 1775 Mr. Mumford was one of a committee of the General Assembly to examine the points of defence and report on the best



THE CHESTER HOUSE

This house, the oldest dwelling in Groton, was built in 1732 by Thomas Chester. From it on Sept. 6th, 1781, four of his sons marched to the defense of Fort Griswold and two of them were mortally wounded that day. The house was in the Chester family over a century. In the war of 1812 a company of soldiers from Groton were on patrol on the coast. A British ship fired a shot on the day which killed the chimney, making a large hole and upsetting a pan of ham which was frying over the coals in the large fireplace, thus, to the dismay of Madame, making a big grease spot on her spotless white floor. The house is in a good state of preservation and the exterior remains the same as a century ago. The farm is now owned by Capt. John O. Spicer of Eastern Point.



COL. EBENEZER AVERY HOUSE

This house was built about 1726 by Col. Ebenezer Avery who was born March 29, 1704, and died in May, 1780. He received a commission as Lieut. of 1st Co. 8th Regiment of Colony of Connecticut, May, 1728, by order of King George II. He was made Captain in 1733, Colonel in 1739, and remained in office until 1775. He was a member of the First Continental Congress and a member of the Committee of Safety. He was a leader in their independence. After that he held his place as Colonel under the Flag of the Free. Col. Avery's son Ebenezer lived at the homestead. On Sept. 6, 1781, when the alarm was given of the landing of the British, he left his plow in the furrow and hastened to the defense of the fort where he met his death.

of taking Ticonderoga, which plan was successfully carried out. He was the first selectman during the early years of the war and was the financial manager of the affairs of Groton. He was in communication with fellow patriots

means of securing the country from invasion. Groton Heights was one of the places selected for a fortification. The Groton patriots, according to Miss Caulkins, "With a spirit of enthusiasm that did not wait for legislative aid, voluntarily threw up intrenchments, excavated ditches, and erected breastworks and though they had no ordnance, except a few pieces at the battery at the Heights, resolved to defend the position to the last extremity." Later the fort was finished and given the name of the Lieutenant Governor. Ledyard was the first actual commander, being appointed July, 1776. He later had charge of the forts on both sides of the river and at Stonington.

A large number of men from Groton enlisted in the Continental army, the town caring for their families. Many of them were under Putnam at the battle of Bunker Hill. Few were left at home to gather in the harvests and defend the town which seemed often in danger of an immediate attack, as many times British men-of-war were seen in the offing. At last on Sept. 6, 1781, came the dread-

## HISTORIC GROTON

ed attack and a small garrison, aided by a few volunteers, were all who were left to meet the enemy.

Bravely they fought and well, until, being obliged to surrender because of the overwhelming number of the enemy, the hero Ledward was killed in the act of surrendering his sword, and such a massacre followed that even the British officers could not endure the



GROTON HEIGHTS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

sight, one of them calling out to his men, "Stop, stop, in the name of heaven! My soul cannot bear it." Many of those in the fight that day were very young men, several merely boys. Little Wm. Latham, called the "Powder Monkey," because he brought ammunition from the magazine to the soldiers, escaped injury and, being but twelve years old, was allowed to go free. Daniel Williams of Saybrook, a boy of fifteen, who was substituting for a neighbor belonging to the garrison, was killed, as was also Thomas Avery, aged seventeen years, son of Park Avery, fighting bravely by his father's side.

Belton Allyn died for his country at seventeen and Thomas Starr at nineteen. Others might be mentioned as young, or but a little older. Sixteen of the defenders of the fort bore the name of Avery. Nine of them were killed, three were wounded and four taken prisoners. Fourteen of the brave men who died that day and three of the wounded were captains, having either belonged to the Continental army or militia, or were captains of ships. In a letter written after the battle by Thomas Mumford to Gov. Trumbull, he says:

"We have Lost the flower of this Town, both its officers and respectable inhabitants. My house with the Chief of the others on the Bank are Burnt and many families Left destitute of food and Raiment."

The village at this time had but one street, along by the river, and when fourteen dwelling houses, four barns, two shops, two stores and one school house were burned, but few buildings would be left. The house of Ebenezer Avery, to which the wounded were taken after being cruelly jolted down the hill, was set on fire, but the flames were extinguished in time to save it and the sufferers within. There were more than forty women of the Congregational church in Groton who that day were made widows, and no man was left at the next communion to pass the bread and wine.

Notwithstanding all that the town had suffered, at the town meeting in November following the battle it was voted to provide clothing for soldiers still in the field, and the next spring they voted again to send out more men, but the war soon closed making further



GROTON BOROUGH BUILDING, THAMES STREET

sacrifice unnecessary. Business of any kind was now at a low ebb, schools were poor, the church fell into a decadent state; some of its members not willing to be taxed to support religion, became Separatists, and held meetings in the historic Avery house. The Congregational church for thirteen years was without a settled pastor, when in 1811 Mr. Timothy Tuttle was installed over the two churches of Groton and North Groton.



RESIDENCE OF MR. HENRY L. BAILEY, RAMSEY STREET



RAILROAD STATION



RESIDENCE OF MRS. SARAH A. MITCHELL, THAMES STREET  
Built in 1781 by Capt. William Latham. At his death it  
passed into possession of James Mitchell who married Capt.  
John, daughter of Capt. Wm. Latham. Since that time it  
has been in the hands of the family of Mitchell. In a direct line have owned and  
been its occupants

In 1812 followed a second war with Great Britain because of the impressing of seamen. This town being the home of so many seafaring men suffered in consequence. Again the

Bailey, who promptly dropped her flannel petticoat and gave it to him with the wish that "the aim might be sure and the execution thorough on the English." For this and other pa-



POST OFFICE

harbor was blocked by British men-of-war and our own shipping went up the river. Fort Griswold was again manned. Rumors of an attack filled the air when one day Maj. Smith,

triotic deeds "Mother Bailey" was much landed. Presidents and statesmen visited her to do her honor.

From time to time after the wars with Great



Photo by Martha W. Starr

THE OLD NORTH LANE SCHOOLHOUSE

who commanded the fort, found he lacked flannel for wadding for the guns, so sent out for some. The stores and dwellings were for the most part closed, as the women and children had fled to places of safety, so none could be found until the messenger met Mrs. Anna

Britain had ceased services were held, as in these days, on Sept. 6, in memory of the Battle of Groton Heights. A noteworthy meeting was held in 1825, when eighteen survivors of the massacre, disfigured with scars of battle and one wearing a vest perforated with bullet



RESIDENCE OF MRS. WILLIAM H. MINER, THAMES STREET



RESIDENCE OF MR. THOMAS MINER, MONUMENT STREET

## HISTORIC GROTON



VIEW OF GROTON HEIGHTS FROM NEAR THE MONUMENT

Courtesy Marvin W. Scott

holes, took part in the celebration. At this meeting it was resolved that a monument be erected in honor of the brave men who fell in Fort Griswold. In 1826, with proper ceremony, the cornerstone was laid, and in 1830 the monument was finished. The funds for building were raised by a lottery which was granted by the legislature.

Groton Monument Association, which is still in existence, had charge of the building. To this organization money was given by Congress in 1881 to carry up the shaft to a symmetrical height, repair the column and beautify the grounds. On the centennial of the battle, Sept. 6, 1881, a great celebration was held which lasted two days, to which thousands of people came. A large fleet of warships was in the harbor; all the military of the state were here with the governor and his staff, also Gen. Sherman and his staff of the United States army. A sham fight took place in imitation of the original battle. Orations were delivered by Gen. Hawley and Hon. Edward Everett Hale; remarks were made by other famous men, and original poems were read, all making a very notable occasion.

At the time of the Civil war, Groton again responded nobly, sending many men to the front and spending about \$80,000 for bounties, premiums and support of families, which was more than any other town in the county with the exception of Norwich.

In 1862 our government felt the need of greater facilities for the building, repair and dockage of its vessels. A board of officers was sent to examine New London harbor. After examination they reported, "The harbor of New London possesses greater advantages for a navy yard than any other location examined by this board."

In 1864 a naval committee of the house also visited the site and reported in its favor. No immediate action, however, was taken. In the year 1867 Mr. John R. Bolles gave to the state a tract of land lying on the river to be given by the state to the government "for naval purposes." In 1868 the gift was made and accepted by the government. After a time a wharf was built. Storehouses, quarters



DWELLINGS OF MRS. ANNIE G. MAPLES, MONUMENT STREET



THE BILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY



RESIDENCE OF MR. JOHN O. SPICER, EASTERN POINT



RESIDENCE OF MR. JOHN S. PENFIELD, THAMES STREET



BUSINESS BLOCK OF MR. C. W. ALLEN, THAMES STREET



BUSINESS PLACE OF THE GROTON GRAIN CO., THAMES STREET



RESIDENCE OF MR. WILLIS L. CHRISTIE, BROAD STREET



RESIDENCE OF MR. BYRON M. O'BRIEN, THAMES STREET

for officers and other buildings were erected, among them a drill room one hundred and eighty-two by forty feet, to be used in connection with a training school for marines which our government then planned to establish here. Nothing more, however, came of it, the yard being used merely as a coaling station.

During the time that the whaling interest was at its height, many men from Groton went to the polar regions. In 1855 during one of his voyages Capt. Jas. M. Buddington rescued the "Resolute," sent by the English government in search of Sir John Franklin, and brought her in to our harbor. The United States rewarded the rescuers and, having put the "Resolute" in good condition, restored her to the British government.

Capt. S. A. Buddington was one of the "Polaris" expedition under Capt. C. A. Hall. The best whaling voyage ever made was by Capt. Ebenezer Morgan in the first steam whaler the "Pioneer."

Sailing for Hudson's Bay June 4, 1804, she returned Sept. 18, 1805, with 1,391 barrels of whale oil and 22,050 pounds of whalebone, a cargo worth \$150,000. Later Capt. Morgan, as soon as Alaska was ceded to the United States in behalf of the Alaska Commercial Co. of New London, made the first landing on St. Paul's Island, the sealing ground, and raised the first American flag.

Our beautiful summer resort, Eastern Point, owes its existence to Mr. Albert L. Avery, who owned the land and conceived the idea of making it a summer watering place. Streets were opened under Mr. Avery's supervision and mainly at his expense and cottages began to be built by wealthy gentlemen from various places, until now a fine summer resort is the result, with many beautiful cottages and a fine hotel, "The Griswold."

In 1900 the Eastern Shipbuilding Co. located in Groton and began the building of the mammoth steamships "Minnesota" and "Dakota." These were built and in due time launched, great crowds coming to the launching. The "Minnesota" first and then the "Dakota" sailed away for service on the Pacific ocean. Then happened what had been proph-

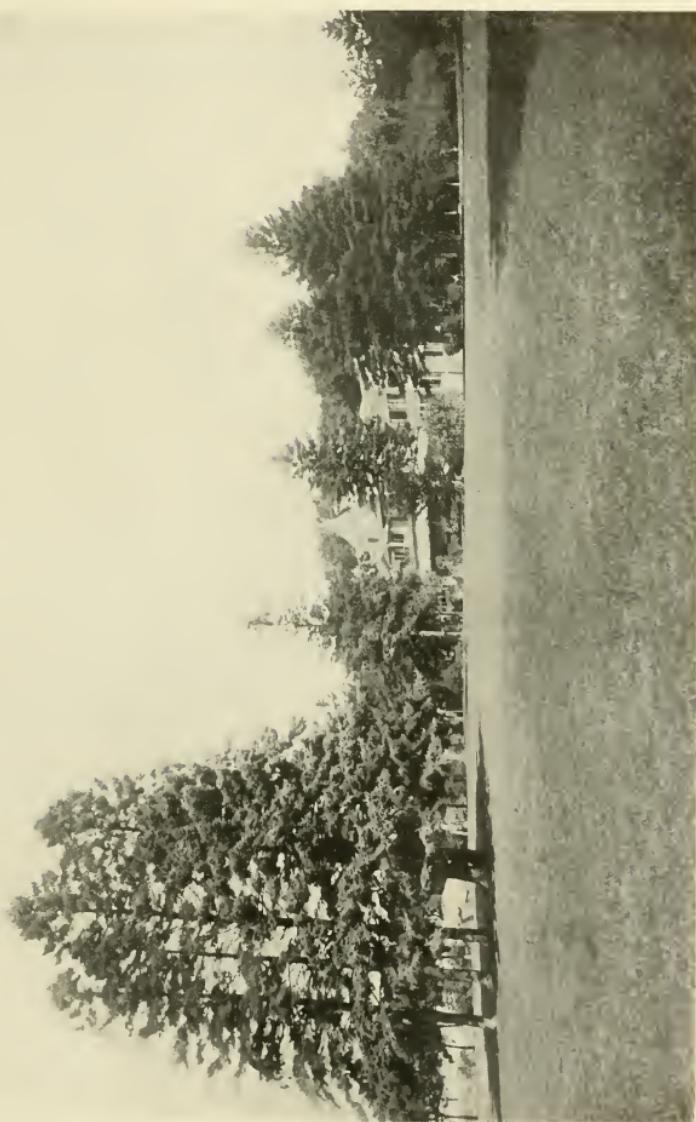
esied, the Eastern Shipbuilding Co. took its departure, leaving but the buildings of the plant and the empty tenement houses which had been built by our speculators. Since the shipbuilding company left us, very little business has been carried on in Groton. However, many of Groton's professional and business men having offices and places of business in New London find Groton a good place in which to live.

In Dec., 1900, a petition was sent to the General Assembly of the state of Connecticut to create Groton Heights a borough, and a charter at the same time was asked by other parties for a trolley between Groton and Westerly.

In 1903 the borough was incorporated and about that time the trolley was put through. The borough now owns its own water supply and lighting facilities, the Groton Electric Light and Water Company having sold its plants to the borough.

Mr. Frederic Bill has conferred a great gift upon Groton in establishing, building and maintaining a free public library, the "Bill Memorial Library." The beautiful building stands on a rise of ground under the shadow of the monument. The original building, which was dedicated in 1890, has lately been much enlarged. The book room was extended some eighteen or twenty feet and a large room intended for a museum was built at the north. In this room is now installed a large and rare collection of butterflies, another gift from Mr. Bill, who is much interested in all nature studies, also a fine collection of birds, the gift of his brother, Mr. Gurdon Bill of Springfield, Mass. Beautiful paintings loaned by Mr. Bill hang upon the walls. The building is beautifully furnished and well lighted. The carefully chosen books are by standard authors, new ones being added from time to time. Groton people cannot too highly estimate the value to them of such a library.

The Anna Warner Bailey Chapter, D. A. R., have done much for the improvement of the village in the vicinity of the fort and monument. They have added a fine annex to the old monument house.



RESIDENCE OF MR. GEORGE H. WATSON, EASTERN POINT



LODGE HOUSE, RESIDENCE OF MR. MORTON F. PLANT



RESIDENCE OF MR. MORTON F. PLANT, EASTERN POINT  
Formal Garden in the Foreground

Mr. Morton F. Plant, who owns a fine estate here, ever since he came to Groton has taken great interest in the place and done much for it. He has aided the D. A. R. in their schemes for improving the village. He

building of colonial architecture, made of red brick with stone trimmings, having offices in it for town clerk, judge of probate and the board of selectmen, and an auditorium for large gatherings.



HOTEL GRISWOLD, EASTERN POINT. ERECTED 1906-1907

has done much for our highways, lately giving \$10,000 toward their improvement. His greatest gift to the town is that of the fine new town hall at Poquonock Bridge, erected there because that was the most central location. It is a handsome and commodious

On the day of the dedication a handsome loving cup was presented to Mr. Plant by the townspeople as a token of their appreciation of his gift and their esteem and regard for the donor.

# A Brief Sketch of the First Congregational Church of Groton

By M. ADELAIDE RANDALL

**I**T is fitting that a history of the town of Groton should include a sketch of its First Congregational Church, since that church had begun its work before Groton became legally distinct from New London, and for more than two hundred years has enriched the life of the community. A church so ancient must have much in common with the history of the town which has grown up around it and a complete account of its pastors, its branches of work and forms of activity, its various houses of worship, and its members would include a large part of the town history. Such an account would be very attractive, but in this short article much of interest must necessarily be omitted, and we must confine ourselves to a description of the formation and early history of that church, and its three earliest meeting houses, and attempt to give only partial accounts of the lives of its pastors up to the year 1880.

In 1687, while Groton was still a part of New London, it was voted in town meeting that the people on the east side should have, "liberty to invite the minister of the town to preach for them on every third Sabbath, during the most inclement months." In 1702 a separate organization was granted with the privilege of building a meeting house, thirty five (35) feet square, of organizing a church and of hiring a minister whose salary should be 70 pounds a year. The year 1703 saw the erection of this meeting house at Center Groton near the juncture of four roads, and to pay the expense of building, 300 acres of town land were sold. No pictures or descriptions of this church have come down to us, but we know that it was in use until 1767, and that here the first four ministers preached.

The first pastor, who was ordained on the eighth of November, 1704, was Rev. Ephraim

Woodbridge, a graduate of Harvard college. He appears to have been greatly respected and beloved by his people who made up practically the entire population of the town. We find that within ten years his salary was increased to 100 pounds instead of the 70 pounds allotted to him, and that he was presented with a farm of one hundred acres, and it is further recorded that the town volunteered "to cut and cart his yearly firewood," substantial proofs of the esteem in which he was held by his flock. The church still cherishes one relic of his pastorate. In 1707, John Davie, a farmer and the first town clerk of Groton, came into possession of a vast English estate and baronetcy. Upon his departure for England he left a gift of six pounds to purchase plate for Mr. Woodbridge's church. This gift has been preserved in the form of a handsome silver communion cup which was used regularly in our worship for nearly two hundred years. It bears this inscription: "The Gift of Sr John Davie to the Church of Christ in Groton."

On account of ill health Mr. Woodbridge was dismissed in 1724 after a pastorate of twenty years. At that time the church had eighty-four members.

The second pastor was Rev. John Owen, also a graduate of Harvard. He was zealous in promoting revivals, and in the church records we find that during revival meetings as many as eighty people were received into the church in six months, the entries being accompanied by such fervent phrases as: "Dens laudetur," "Gratia tibi Domine," and "Christus triumphans." From these same records, we are led to believe that Mr. Owen thought it fully as important that his converts should continue in grace, for of March twenty-fourth, 1752, we find this entry: "At a meeting of the First Church of Christ in Groton, after prayer,

it was voted by the Church that such members of this church, whom the church thought Delinquent and walked Disorderly, should be called to an account before the church." Then they voted particularly concerning eight members (whose names are given) "that they be notified to appear before the church and give their reasons why they had separated from the public worship and communion of the church." At a meeting in April, when the delinquents had reported, the record continues: "This church having heard all the reasons they offered, and considered and weighed them, voted that they looked upon the reasons as altogether insufficient to justify them, and that their conduct herein was disorderly, sinful and very offensive, and that therefore they be suspended from communion until they are convinced thereof and make Gospel satisfaction."

This personal supervision by the pastor seemed to agree with the church, for during his twenty-six years of ministry, two hundred and three members were added to this congregation. Mr. Owen was distinguished for his liberality toward those who differed from him in points of doctrine, and he advocated religious tolerance to such a degree that in 1744 he was summoned before the Assembly for heresy. He was dismissed on the ground that his fault was not due to contempt of law, but rather to a misguided conscience and overheated zeal. Mr. Owen died in 1753, and his tombstone graphically states:

"Man of God, a faithful seer,  
Husband, kind, a father dear  
And indeed a neighbor near  
Was he, whose clay is lodged here."

The third pastor was Rev. Daniel Kirkland who remained here only four years, and of whose pastorate there are but slight records. He was followed by Rev. Jonathan Barber, the last pastor who preached in the Center Groton meeting house. He was graduated from Yale in 1730, and for awhile labored among the Mohegan Indians. When George Whitefield first came to New England in 1740, Mr. Barber was among the first to offer sympathy and co-operation, and Whitefield believed him sent as an answer to prayer; henceforth their

friendship was mutual and perpetual. After Mr. Barber was settled in Groton, Whitefield visited him on February sixth, 1763, and preached in the old meeting house. In the following June he came again and preached from a scaffolding erected from the second story window of the Barber house. The area around was thronged with people who had come from miles about to hear him. So interested were they, that large numbers followed his carriage when he drove to New London. That was a great day for Groton!

After a pastorate of ten years, Mr. Barber died and was buried in the Starr cemetery. At his simple funeral, there was neither hearse, nor coaches for the mourners. The honored remains were borne upon the shoulders of many



THE KINNE MEETING HOUSE

chosen pall-bearers, each taking his turn, while a long procession followed, walking. No display of any sort was indulged in, but genuine were all the expressions of reverential sorrow and love.

At this time, 1767, the second meeting house came into being. The first that had been used for sixty-three years had fallen into disrepair and as Groton Bank was evidently increasing in population, it was decided to move in that direction. The situation chosen was the cross-road running north to Pleasant Valley, where it joins the village road that runs up the hill to the Miner homestead. The new building was quadrangular in form, a substantial structure of white oak, well clap-boarded, which for seating capacity compared well with our present church. As it was painted

but once during its existence of sixty-seven years, it grew black, and that name clung to it although it is known in history as "the Kinne meeting-house." It had doors on three sides, the east, west and south, and as one entered the south door he faced the quaint old pulpit, perched high above the congregation, with its huge sounding board. A straight wooden bench at the back of the pulpit provided the minister's seat, and over his head was a small window. On each side of the center aisle were the high-backed pews; a boy's chin would just come to the top of one. Every part of the inside work was of clear native pine and none of its rich coloring was ever dimmed by paint.

Around the walls of the room, was a row of pews interrupted by the aisles from the side doors. A gallery ran around three sides of the house, and in the front sat the singers under the leadership of five choristers. But all these leaders were sometimes unable to hold the congregation to the tune as lined; it would persist in singing the most familiar one. On such occasions the singing would sometimes be interrupted, "to get a fresh start," and sometimes it would be allowed to proceed with somewhat inharmonious results. At first there were no cushions, carpets or fire in this church, but about 1848, in the face of much opposition, a box stove was placed in front of the pulpit. Oftentimes staunch opposers of this luxury would complain of the "intense" heat and of the discomfort caused by it, only to be told that there was not one bit of fire in the stove.

Into this new church, in 1700, came Rev. Aaron Kinne, "the pastor of the Revolution." It is a matter of deep regret that we have very slight church records of his pastorate, but from other sources we can judge of the trials through which he and his people passed. In those stirring days religion was somewhat tinged with polities, and on the Sabbath, the minister's sermon was very apt to deal with the wrongs which the American patriots were enduring and to suggest some remedy for them. But this congregation was not to be contented with merely discussing the matter;

it was to have an active part in the new-born nation's struggle. On September sixth, 1781, in the Battle of Groton Heights, every male member of the church, except Deacon Solomon Morgan, who was then a very old man, was killed. To Mr. Kinne came the sad duty of consoling and ministering to sixty widows and three times as many orphans, all made such in one day. It was due to his faith and energy that the church survived this stunning blow. But his conflicts did not close with the war, in 1783, for the people made an effort to rid themselves of the English custom of supporting religion by taxation, and when they found Mr. Kinne opposed to the abolishment of that custom, many of the influential persons set up another religious meeting. For awhile, Mr. Kinne preached as a missionary in New York state, hiring a supply for his pulpit at home, but soon amicable relations with the Groton church were restored and he completed his pastorate of twenty-nine years, the longest in the history of the church.

After the dismissal of Mr. Kinne, this church was without a settled pastor for thirteen years, and during that period moral depravity ruled. "The village was a moral waste." In 1811, Rev. Timothy Tuttle's ordination took place in the Kinne meeting house, and a new order of things began to prevail. He was made pastor of two churches, the one in North Groton, now Ledyard, which had only five members; and the one at Groton Bank which had twenty-seven. Mr. Tuttle preached to each congregation on alternate Sundays, but chose his home in Ledyard. He was exceedingly faithful to his charges, and on many a stormy Sunday, he made his eight mile trip to the Lord's house. When he was settled, the country was preparing for its second great war with England, in behalf of free commerce and sailors' rights. This town suffered especially, since it has always been the home of so many sea faring men, and while the river was blockaded by British war vessels, both pastor and people were sorely tried. During his pastorate of twenty-three years, sixty nine members were added to the church and the first Sabbath school was opened, so the church

appears to have been flourishing. On the sixth of September, 1821, Mr. Tuttle delivered in the Old Fort the "anniversary sermon" which by request was published and is still extant, so that if any reader feels so inclined he may come into touch with this interesting man, through his own writings. In 1834, at his own request, Mr. Tuttle was dismissed from this church, in order that he might give his time wholly to the North Church. On June sixth, 1864, he was called to his God, and from his monument in Ledyard, he ever says to his people in both towns, "Remember the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you."

call on one of his parishioners and was to take tea with the cordial lady. We can imagine that for the occasion, "Grandmother's" flowing blue china had been brought out, her very best preserves and cake placed on the table and possibly some very choice tea came down from its shelf in the closet, since it was an open secret that Elder Tuttle was very fond of tea. During the dainty meal she inquired solicitously of her guest:

"Elder Tuttle, is your tea right?"

"There's no bad taste to it," replied the Elder simply.

This seemed rather unappreciative until the hostess peeked into her tea-pot and found it



THE OLD CHURCH ON THAMES STREET

Mr. Tuttle, or Elder Tuttle, as he was always called, was a very tall, strongly built man whose countenance mirrored forth the dignity and solidity of his character. Every one felt great reverence for him which approached awe, not that he was austere, for he was truly kind, but that his whole mind was absorbed with the thought of the solemnity of a Christian's life. Around this straightforward, outspoken man have gathered many stories. One of the most familiar runs something like this:

One winter afternoon Elder Tuttle came to

contained merely hot water. And even to this day in Groton, a forgetful hostess is likely to laugh and say, "Well, I declare, I've made some of Elder Tuttle's tea."

It is reported that this same hostess once tried to pry from Elder Tuttle a secret concerning a wedding fee which he had received. After she had questioned him awhile, he leaned forward and said very encouragingly, "Can you keep a secret?"

"Yes, of course I can."

"Well, so can I."

In 1830, the people began to discuss the mat-

ter of repairing their meeting house, which had now been used sixty-three years, just as long as their first house of worship. During that time, Groton had grown to be a fair-sized village, and as this church now ministered to this district particularly it was decided to locate a new building within the village of Groton. Accordingly it was built in 1833 on upper Thames street not far below the present draw-bridge on property given by the Barber family. At that time the situation was very desirable and pleasant, overlooking as it does, the beautiful Thames river. This building was of course built according to modern ideas, although it received two additions before it became the building we now know. This building is still standing, although the graceful Gothic spire was removed, and interior alterations made, when it ceased to be used as a place of religious worship. For four years after Mr. Tuttle's dismissal the church was without a regular pastor, during which time four able substitutes filled the pulpit.

The Rev. Jared Avery, a descendant of one of the founders of the town of Groton, who was installed in 1839, was the seventh pastor. The beginning of Mr. Avery's ministry here was the opening of a new era of prosperity for the church. After an interval of forty years, the townspeople now had a minister living among them and could listen to preaching every Sunday. In 1842, a revival of great power was felt in this community, and the next year, many members were received into the church. One of the results was the formation of the Baptist church of this village, and another was the marked increase in the spirit of giving among the people. At this time, a schedule of benevolent giving was for the first time adopted. This ministry, which lasted twelve years, terminated at Mr. Avery's request in 1851. Mr. Avery was known among his people for his enigmatic sayings and his puns, and many of his bright remarks are still current.

The eighth pastor of this church was Rev. George A. Woodward, who was installed in 1851. His family had been associated especially with educational work, his great-grand-

father being the founder and first president of Dartmouth college, and he himself established a high school at Shrewsbury, New Jersey, of which he was the principal for four years. His ministry in Groton was marked with successful progress and continued for four years and a half. During that time our Articles of Faith and our Covenant were revised, printed and circulated among the members of the church, and a decided improvement was manifested in the charitable contributions. His resignation came unexpectedly in 1856 and was reluctantly accepted by the people.

For the following eight years, substitutes again supplied the pulpit so that the next regular minister, Rev. Samuel Brown, was not installed until 1864. Mr. Brown was a graduate of Yale and previous to his conversion had been a lawyer and a teacher. Groton was his second pastorate and for two years and a half he was "a burning and shining light" here. He was especially interested in missionary work and during his pastorate a great impetus was given to the church benevolences. The formation of The Groton Bank Temperance Union stands as a monument to his enterprise. When this project met with determined opposition, the Baptist pastor, Elder Dewhurst, supported Mr. Brown loyally. It is said that never had there been more Christian union in the church, and among the churches of the village than there was during Mr. Brown's ministry. His early death, in 1866, cut short his many plans for doing good. During his brief term of service, thirty-five members were added to the church.

The tenth pastor was Rev. Joseph E. Swallow, a graduate of Dartmouth college. During his ministry, about \$10,000 was expended in enlarging and improving the house of worship and the congregation was largely increased. Mr. Swallow was also active in trying to promote public education in the town, and largely through his efforts, the nucleus of the school building we now use was erected. The story is told, that one Sunday when Mr. Swallow was occupying the pulpit of a New London minister, he was annoyed by the conduct of the church organist, who sat with

the choir. He stopped in the midst of his discourse and gazed with his piercing eyes at the offender. Naturally all eyes were turned toward the culprit who felt very uncomfortable. At the close of the service, the organist, who was somewhat of a wag, took his revenge by playing, "When the Swallows Homeward Fly."

Mr. Swallow's dismissal took place July first, 1870, and until 1871 the church was without a pastor. Rev. James B. Tyler was ordained in September of that year. His death occurred on May twenty-eighth, 1872, after he had been here only eight months. He was a

heartily for every good interest of the community. During several successive winters he held revival meetings in his church conducted by well-known evangelists of the time. He did not content himself with simply holding such meetings, but often took the visiting evangelist around from house to house, so that the people might come into intimate, friendly relations with him. As a result of his zeal, many members were received into the church. In 1877 after much labor and painstaking research he published a "Review of the Congregational Church" from 1704 to his pastorate, with sketches of the ministers. That



NEW CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

man of strong intellectuality and much culture, and if he had been spared it is evident that he would have accomplished much good. The memoirs of Mr. Tyler have been written at length by Rev. J. H. DeForest and the following quotation is from that volume: "As a pastor, he was pious, sincere, faithful, untiring. He loved his people with an unchanging love, and almost his last words were, 'You are very kind to me, I love you all.'"

After Mr. Tyler's death, the church was without a pastor until November of 1872, when Rev. John A. Woodhull was ordained. He was a very spiritual man and worked

book contains all that can be gleaned from records concerning the church, and is very accurate in its information. It is by far the best authority on the subject and to it we are indebted for many of the facts embodied in this article. Mr. Woodhull was dismissed in 1880, after serving eight years.

Since 1880, three pastors have ministered in this church: the Rev. A. J. McLeod for twelve years, Rev. Edward C. Williams for two years, and Rev. Frederick S. Hyde for thirteen years. It is not our purpose to chronicle in detail the events of those pastorates; that privilege we leave for some future writer.

We shall mention but one important event, the building of a new church structure.

In 1900, the question of making repairs to the old church arose, but when it was found that they would of necessity be very extensive, the church people decided to build a new structure instead. The site chosen was the lot on the corner of Monument and Meridian streets, and here, in 1901, just sixty-eight years after the dedication of the former church, the corner stone of the new structure was laid. This beautiful edifice is in the Old English style of architecture, and is constructed of field stones laid in cement. The front of its tower, over the western entrance, was built of stones taken from localities connected with the history of the church and town. There are some from the old church lot at Center Groton, some from the "old black meeting house," and many from the home lots of the early pastors. Each of the deacons had a memorial stone and many of the old families of the town are here represented.

The church treasures three beautiful memorial windows. A very large one representing the parable of The Ten Talents, occupies the western end. This was presented by the Avery family, whose members have always occupied a very prominent position in the town and church. On the north side is a window from the Tiffany studios representing Christ as the Shepherd of His Sheep, a fitting memorial to Rev. John A. Woodhull. The third, of conventional design, is a memorial to

Deacon and Mrs. Wilson Allyn. The dedication exercises were held on October sixteenth, 1902, the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the church, the dedicatory sermon being preached by Rev. S. H. Howe, D. D., of Norwich from the text, "What mean ye by these stones."

In June, 1908, Rev. James R. Danforth, D. D., was installed as our sixteenth pastor and we sincerely hope that for many years he may live among us "that good, diffused, may more abundant grow."

One can not study the history of this church without feeling that in many ways, it has been especially blest. It had a most noble ancestry of men and women who were children of the best early settlers upon the shores of Massachusetts bay, and in whose veins flowed the best blood of the mother country. Sturdy in body, keen in mind and fervent in spirit, they gave to this church a splendid birthright. It has been enriched by an educated ministry. Its pastors have all been graduates of colleges; men of intellectuality and culture who have done much toward maintaining a high standard of living here in Groton. It has also noble descendants. From it have gone forth half a score of ministers, among them the first Episcopal bishop in this country; and many useful men and women in all walks of life have received their religious training from this church. With one of her pastors we say, "With a past so full of blessing and attainment, may the future of this religious household be grand in holy usefulness."

## Groton Heights Baptist Church

By REV. GEORGE R. ATHA



CHURCH that was organized in 1843 cannot boast of "hoary walls and ancient halls," especially if it is worshipping in the second building it has occupied since that date. Yet the writer of this brief record being privileged from time to time to hold the cups and plates of the old pewter communion set, has thus been led to think of the brethren who partook of the elements of the sacrament therefrom, and he cannot but rejoice in their history.

The story is brief, covering but sixty-six years, and it begins thus: "A council called by certain brethren and sisters residing in the towns of Groton, New London and Jewett City, for the purpose of giving them fellowship as a church, to be called 'The Baptist Church at Groton Bank,' convened at the house of Deacon Robert A. Avery on Thursday, March 16, 1843, and organized at 11 o'clock a. m. After due inquiry into the circumstances under which the church came into existence, the council voted 'That when the church shall adopt the articles and the covenant, we extend to it the hand of fellowship as a church in Gospel order.'

Following this action the council adjourned to meet in the meeting house for the public exercises, the Congregational church having kindly offered their house for the occasion. The church came together and in the presence of the congregation adopted their articles of faith and covenant, after which the services proceeded as follows:

Reading of Scriptures and prayer by Rev. B. F. Hadden; Sermon by Rev. B. Cook, text, Ephesians 2: 19-20; Prayer of Recognition by Rev. L. Covill; Hand of Fellowship by Rev. H. R. Knapp; Charge to the Church by Rev. L. R. Stoward; concluding prayer by Rev. E.

Denison. Such is the story of the beginning of the church.

At the time of the organization there were 51 enrolled as members of the church. Services were held either at the North Lane school house or in the school house of District No. 1. But temporary quarters did not long satisfy this little company, whose buoyant, optimistic and progressive spirit is borne witness to in the following paragraphs taken verbatim from the church records:

1. At a meeting held on March 25th, 1843 (nine days after the organization was effected) it was voted: "That we circulate a subscription to build a meeting house for the church."

2. On the 18th of July, 1844, it was voted: "That the building committee be instructed to accept proposals and build a meeting house for the Groton Bank Baptist Church, according to their best judgment."

3. In May, 1845, it was voted: "That our meeting house be dedicated to the service of Almighty God on the 4th of June, 1845, and that Elder Jabez S. Swan be invited to preach the dedication sermon."

This first meeting house served the church as its place of worship from 1845 until 1872. It still stands on Thames St., just where you make the turn in going to the railroad station. It was remodelled and has been used for some years now as a dwelling.

In 1871, during the second pastorate of Elder Allen, the church building was found too small to accommodate the congregation, so the subscription list was again circulated with the result that \$4,500 was raised, which with the value of the church property made a working capital of over \$6,000. A building committee was appointed and the work pushed forward vigorously so that on the 11th of July, 1872, the building was finished and dedicated, the sermon on this occasion being preached by Rev. John Davies of Norwich. The church edifice has been well kept and is in a good state of preservation. In 1874 it was freed

from debt so far as the building fund was concerned, and during that year also a bell was placed in the tower by eight of the brethren of the church. To-day the growth of the Bible school and the desire for a more convenient arrangement for classes is leading the trustees and other officers to think seriously as to how they can best rearrange the vestry to facilitate and make more efficient this vigorous department of the church's work.

Counting the present incumbent, it may be interesting to note that the church has had during these sixty-six years thirteen pastors, while on three different occasions there have

in frame and in heart he gave a splendid proof of his ministry. Two hundred and forty-three were added to the church during his pastorate and his name will ever be honored in this community.

Rev. E. T. Miller's pastorate was next in length, covering a period of eight years and seven months, and next again in point of time was the pastorate of Rev. L. B. Sears, who rounded out six years with this people. Elder Ballentine would come next with four and a third years of splendid achievement in both material and spiritual things. While many of the pastorates were brief, God's blessing was



GROTON HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH

been so-called supply pastors. The pastors were, in order, as follows: Reverends Rutherford Russell, N. T. Allen, (first pastorate), Isaac Cheesborrough, Edgar Hewitt, George Matthews, Elihu Dewhurst, N. T. Allen (second pastorate), Noyes W. Miner, D. D., George R. Darrow, George N. Ballentine, E. T. Miller, L. B. Sears and George R. Atha. The supply pastors were E. Andrews, M. M. Haven, and William A. Smith.

Of this group none can compare, of course, either in length of service, or in their grip upon the church and community, with Elder Allen, who for a period of almost twenty years guided the affairs of the church. Large

not wanting in them as the records attest. Especially is this to be noted in the brief ministries of Revs. Rutherford Russell, Elihu Dewhurst and Dr. N. W. Miner, who though here for but brief periods, respectively, saw eighty-four, thirty-two and sixty-one added to the church. Rev. W. A. Smith who served as supply-pastor, gratuitously, too, be it said, had his service of love honored by twenty-eight being added to the church while it was under his care. God has indeed honored his servants here, in that over six hundred altogether during these years have been brought into the fellowship of the church, and all have been privileged to share, not only in the sowing of the

seed, but also in the reaping of the harvest. The years 1845, 1848, 1872-73 and 1882 were years marked by special manifestations of spiritual power in the conversion of men.

It would be a difficult thing to determine just where one ought to stop if he attempted to make mention of the men and women, who during these sixty-six years have sought by loving and painstaking service in this church to honor God and advance the interests of His kingdom. But there are two names that no one writing of the church would be able to omit, so indelibly have they been written in the church's history. The first of these names is that of Deacon Robert Austin Avery, through "whose untiring and self-denying efforts this church had its birth." For nineteen years he served as senior deacon, seldom being absent from the services though he lived some distance from the church. He died December 20, 1862. The church records during those nineteen years indicate that the heart and hand of Deacon Avery were ever mindful of the church, and that he abounded in every good word and work. Besides him was Deacon Charles H. Starr, who also was with the church at the beginning even though his name does not appear as a constituent member. He was elected deacon in November, 1845, and served the church in that office for a period of sixty-two years. A quiet, simple, straight-

forward, good man, his sincerity and virtue impressed his brethren in the church and also his neighbors and fellow townsmen. This record is all too brief to indicate what the earnest faith and piety of these brethren meant in the way of blessing to the church, but without such mention of them any record would have to be marked incomplete.

Of the allied and auxiliary organizations to the church, the Sunday school of course stands first in the hearts of the people. It has an enrolled membership of about two hundred and fifty, with an average attendance of one hundred and forty. Its nineteen classes give opportunity for students of all ages to share in Bible-study, and it manifests an active interest in all the varied missionary and philanthropic enterprises espoused by the church.

Other organizations are the Ladies' Missionary Society, the Ladies' Benevolent Society, and the Baptist Young People's Union. These give ample opportunity for expression and participation in the varied lines of work, and all are proving helpful to the work of the church at large in practical ways and in prayerful ways, in studious paths and in paths where time and talent must be sacrificed that the church may be sustained, and the blessed gospel preached both here at home and yonder across the sea.

## The Bishop Seabury Memorial Church

By REV. C. S. M. STEWART

**T**HE Rev. R. M. Duff of St. James' Church, New London, held the first Episcopalian services on Wednesday evenings in Lent, 1874, which resulted in the founding of the Mission in Groton. A Sunday af-

ternoon service was conducted by him during the following June and continued until October of that year, when the Rev. Millidge Walker, the regular appointed missionary, assumed charge of the work. Success crowned the labor of the missionary and soon sufficient funds had been obtained for the construction of the present church edifice. The Rev. Mr. Walker submitted plans drawn by himself to a committee appointed by the board of directors of the the missionary society of the diocese which were found to be satisfactory and ground was broken on the 20th of July, 1875. The first service held in the church was on Christmas evening of the same year, and there the congregation continued to worship until the following Whitsunday, June 4th, 1876. The church building being still in an unfinished condition, the services were held for a brief period of time in Mechanics' Hall, where previously the congregation had met for worship.

A completed and churchly structure awaited the return of the congregation on Sunday, August 13th, 1876, and the Rev. J. F. Taunt was the officiating clergyman. The Rev. Mr. Taunt having been appointed priest-in-charge by the bishop of the diocese, entered upon his duties September 3d, 1876. The last mentioned clergyman was followed by the Rev. H. T. Gregory whose ministration began March 6th, 1878. The Rev. Mr. Gregory rendered the important service of lifting a debt of \$1,750.00 which had prevented the consecration of the church. On Tuesday, September 13th, 1881, the church was consecrated and set apart forever for holy worship under the title of Seabury Memorial Church, in reverential respect to the memory of the Right Reverend Samuel Seabury, D. D., the first bishop of the American church and of the diocese of Connecticut, who was born in Groton, November 30th, 1729.



SEABURY MEMORIAL CHAPEL

turnoon service was conducted by him during the following June and continued until October of that year, when the Rev. Millidge

The Missionaries in charge have been:

1. The Rev. R. M. Duff—Lent, 1874, to 18th Sunday after Trinity.
2. The Rev. Millidge Walker—18th Sunday after Trinity to Lent, 1876.

(The Rev. C. H. B. Tremaine—Ash Wednesday, 1876, to Whitsunday.)

3. The Rev. J. Ferdinand Taunt—12th Sunday after Trinity, 1876, to Lent, 1878.
4. The Rev. Henry T. Gregory—Ash Wednesday, 1878, to Holy Innocents, 1882.
5. Rev. Orlando P. Starkey—Easter Day, 1883, to Lent, 1885.

(The Rev. Peter L. Shepard—Lent, 1885, to 11th Sunday after Trinity.)

6. The Rev. James O. Ticknor—(In connection with St. Mark's Parish, Mystic) 11th Sunday after Trinity, 1885, to 8th Sunday after Trinity, 1886.
7. The Rev. William L. Peck—17th Sunday after Trinity, 1886, to 6th Sunday after Trinity, 1894.
8. The Rev. X. Alanson Welton—1894 to 1896.
9. The Rev. Theodore M. Peck—1896 to 1898.
10. The Rev. Paul F. Hoffman—1st Sunday after Trinity, 1898 to 1902.  
1902-1904—The Rev. Millidge Walker.  
1904-1906—Supplies.  
1906-1907—The Rev. F. H. Stedman.  
1907-1908—The Rev. Adelbert McGinnis.  
1908—The Rev. C. S. M. Stewart.

## The Work of the Anna Warner Bailey Chapter, D. A. R. of Groton and Stonington

By GRACE D. WHEELER

**A**BOUT fifty years ago, there lived on the old Gershom Lambert estate, near the borough of Stonington, Conn., a family by the name of Day. Some years before they had left their home in New London, Conn., for New Orleans, La., where Mr. Day accumulated in business a handsome fortune and upon returning north for a summer home, saw and purchased this beautiful estate, later known as Walnut Grove or the Day Place. It is situated off the public road, but reached by passing through the gate at the lodge, where wending your way in a green meadow, under arching trees and over bridges, you reach at last, the handsome mansion built there by Mr. James L. Day and beautified during his ownership, through the summer months and later, when he occupied it for the season. Here his family lived in luxury, entertaining friends and bringing not a little social distinction to Stonington.

Among this family of several beautiful daughters, was Abby, who married Cuthbert Harrison Slocomb, the wedding occurring amid much happiness in this house and later they went to live in New Orleans. After travelling much abroad and at home and experiencing many eventful episodes in social life, bearing with fortitude the loss of her husband and with equal equanimity, the happy marriage of her daughter, to Count Di. Brazza Savorgnan of Italy. Mrs. Slocomb came back in later years, to her early home in Stonington and visited friends, while seeking a beautiful location for a home, which she found at Groton, Conn., where, after combining two ordinary houses into the one modern and unique design, which stands there today, on Monument street, she named it "Daisy Crest over Groton."

Perhaps living in the very shadow of Groton Heights' towering granite monument and conse-

quently nearby Old Fort Griswold, with its glorious and patriotic, but ghastly historic memory of Revolutionary days, was the cause of imbuing Mrs. Slocomb with zeal in the service of those Revolutionary descendants, who formed October 11th, 1890, in Washington, D. C., the National Society of The Daughters of the American Revolution. Certain it was, that she responded promptly to the call for help, which came to her from Mrs. H. V. Boynton, Vice-President General, in charge of the organization of chapters, who desired that daughters of the heroes of the Revolution should assist in forming chapters in every city, town and county of Connecticut, which should foster patriotism and education in the principles of our government and also preserve the unwritten history of the struggle for independence that our ancestors endured.

Mrs. Slocomb came at once to Stonington seeking members for this new society and called at my home to secure help in tracing those eligible to membership. Thus my name stands first after the Regent, as the second charter member. In August, 1893, Mrs. Slocomb sent out letters of invitation to ladies to form a chapter in Groton and Stonington, and later in the month held an informal meeting at her house, of those eligible and desirous of forming a chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, which organization was later named Anna Warner Bailey, in honor of Groton's most distinguished patriotic woman of Revolutionary days.

The first regular meeting of this chapter was held September 13th, 1893, at Mrs. Slocomb's home, she having been appointed Regent by the National Board at Washington. There were fourteen ladies present and other officers were chosen, viz.: Mrs. Eugene Baker, registrar; Miss Grace D. Wheeler, vice-registrar; Miss Julia Avery, secretary; and Miss Sarah H. Mor-

gan, treasurer. The Board of Management was Mrs. Daniel Morgan, Mrs. Frederic Bill, since deceased, and Mrs. Belton A. Copp, while the sixteen charter members were Mrs. C. H. Slocomb, Miss Grace D. Wheeler, Mrs. Isaac P. Boutse, Miss Sarah H. Morgan, Mrs. J. O. Spicer, Mrs. Eugene L. Baker, Mrs. Henry H.



MRS. ANNA WARNER BAILEY  
Known as "Mother Bailey"

Stoddard, Mrs. Elisha Thomas, Mrs. Frederic Bill, Miss Mary J. Avery, Mrs. Belton A. Copp, Mrs. Daniel Morgan, Miss Julia O. Avery, Miss Cora Avery, Miss Beulah Starkey, Mrs. N. S. Fish.

In April, 1894, the first meeting in Stonington was held at Mrs. F. B. Noyes' home. The Regent used a gavel, presented to her by the chapter, and made of oak from a rafter in Mother Bailey's house highly polished and with an inscription on a silver plate. There were twenty-five present. Within the year, there were 103 members, making with one exception the largest chapter in the state. Three years later there were 150 members and seven real daughters of Revolutionary heroes had been found and presented with the gold spoon from the national society at Washington. About this time Mrs. Slocomb was requested to allow her name to be used for State Regent, but declined the honor, saying, she "felt convinced that the Daughters of Connecticut would be best served by remaining where she was." We see now how wise her decision, as we glance along the various lines of work, car-

ried successfully to a grand finish, for in less than three months after her appointment as Regent, she had begun consulting with Congressman Charles Russell as approaching the United States authorities in regard to the wall and grounds of Fort Griswold and the Monument House, so that it should be a fitting reception hall for the patriotic public, who visit it in such multitudes every year, 1,200 names being inscribed on the visitors' book in two months. She was successful in her good work and the General Assembly made us custodians of the house, later granting three hundred dollars a year for care and repays.

Right upon this, the chapter sent those numerous petitions, 150 or 160, to Congress, asking for the consecrated soil which rightfully belonged to Fort Griswold's battle ground, lying directly east, which was later incorporated into the grounds of the old redoubt by the United States government. These printed words can scarcely convey the amount of thought, work and time needed to accomplish this purchase, but the sincere thanks of all patriotic people are given this chapter for preventing the building of houses, which was fast encroaching upon this historic ground.

Our meetings were generally held at the Bill Library, but as the Fairie Masque, a charming play, written by Mrs. Slocomb and held in the



THE MOTHER BAILEY HOUSE

New London Theatre, by our society in June, 1895, proved so successful, the proceeds, four hundred dollars, were used to fit up the little stone monument house, which had been voted by the Monument Association for their use and granted to us by the State, so that on the sixth of September, 1894, the 113th anniversary of

the massacre at Groton Heights, the keys were given over to the Regent and the house was formally opened to the public. The chapter was present with their invited guests, representing church, state, army, navy, art, literature, wealth and fashion, who all listened attentively to a speech by Hon. C. A. Russell, and a poem written by our life poetess, Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, was read by Mrs. Clara B. Whitman, which with music and refreshments filled the programme.

At sunset, Chinese lanterns flashed out from the monument and house, while fireworks and

Ledyard, where he paid tribute money of a York shilling to a tidy, little woman, living in the stone building, from whom he received the key to the monument, and so this house has been occupied by different people till the Anna Warner Bailey Chapter took charge in 1894.

The next meeting after the formal opening was held at Mrs. Slocomb's and the society, through the treasurer, Miss Morgan, presented our Regent with a jewelled badge, representing the symbolical spinning wheel, made of blue enamel with a diamond in the center and in the end of each of the thirteen spokes. It is need-



MONUMENT AND MONUMENT HOUSE

bonfires lighted the old fort. This was indeed a gala day long to be remembered. We scarcely thought the day was so near when this house would be enlarged and rededicated to accommodate the growth and gifts of the patriotic public. The early history of this stone house is interesting as we note it was built from stone unfit for the monument and has been used as a janitor's home since 1831, first by John Benham, who later purchased the large Benham farm of today. In 1843, the historian Lossing, relates, "That he crossed the Thames and visited Mt.

less to say that Mrs. Slocomb responded feelingly and fittingly and then mentioned in her yearly report that she had secured seven national members for a Louisiana chapter and nominated a friend as Regent, to represent them in Congress.

In the glorious month of October our Regent, at her home, gave a reception to the State Regent, Mrs. DelB. Randolph Keim. She was assisted in receiving by our officers and members. Sherry of New York catered, serving refreshments emblematic of the occasion. Ices in the

form of cannon and bombs, and cakes and tiny United States flags were in abundance. A short time after Mrs. William D. Moss entertained our Regent at her home in Westerly, where she met a number of Rhode Island ladies, who later became members of our chapter, and ever since, one meeting yearly is held at Westerly and Stonington, always well sustained by the members at home and from Groton.

In June, 1895, Mrs. Slocomb was chosen chairman of the chapter committee and promoter of the national society of the Children of the American Revolution and formed six local societies in New London County, and one in Louisiana, viz.: Thomas Starr at Eastern Point, Thomas Avery at Poquonock, Jonathan Brooks at New London, Col. Ledward at Groton, William Latham (or Powder Monkey) at Stonington, Samuel Ward at Westerly, and Old Glory at New Orleans. It would require pages to tell of all the work done by these children and their leaders, of tablets placed upon historic houses and objects, one upon the Whitefield tree in Stonington in front of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fernando Wheeler, and again honoring Whitefield by placing another tablet on the old brown Barber house at Center Groton, now owned by Percy Colver, where Whitefield preached in 1764. Tablets on the Ebenezer Avery and Anna Warner Bailey houses in Groton, a stone placed with ceremonies at the grave of Hulda Hall and a boulder erected at Daniel Stanton's grave in Stonington, testify to their patriotic ardor.

But to return to our work in the Anna Warner Bailey chapter, of which there is enough to fill a good-sized book. We find at the regular meetings, much business concerning by-laws and amendments, committees named for souvenir china, armorial shields, and souvenir silver bells, representing the flannel petticoat which Mother Bailey gave to our patriotic ancestors to make wadding for their guns to fire upon the English. The numerous meetings of the Groton Tea Club and New London Reading Club are often mentioned. Clothing and money are reported sent to Mrs. Rose Hawthorne Lathrop for her hospital work

among the poor in New York city, which was very gratefully appreciated. Improvement of the well on the monument grounds was made by securing the old well curb on the new post office site in New London, which was originally owned by Mrs. Slocomb's great grandfather, Capt. Elisha Hinman.

In 1896 Mrs. Slocomb was chairman of the national hymn committee and made an address at the Continental Congress in Washington on this subject. Later Mrs. Clara B. Whitman of Groton was elected regent, and Mrs. Slocomb was appointed chairman of the monument house committee.

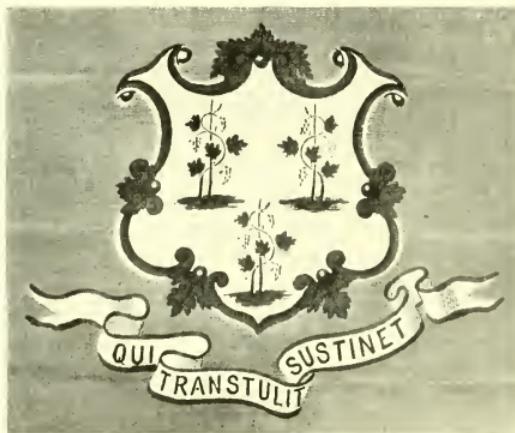
When Mrs. Slocomb found need of a flag for decorative purposes, she was informed that there never was a Connecticut state flag established by law. None of the flags carried by Connecticut troops, from Colonial days to the present time, was ever adopted by the General Assembly, though there were thirty-five different designs extant, while red, blue yellow, and once green flags were used to distinguish Connecticut troops. Our chapter submitted several designs to the General Assembly for a legalized state flag. One was approved, which is made of blue bunting 12 by 18 feet. It has the state shield in white, bordered in silver and gold, and the old colonial seal of three clinging grape vines, of strength and beauty, wreathing themselves upward, freighted with full fruitage, and said to be symbolical of religion, liberty and knowledge. Beneath the shield, on a silvery streamer, in blue letters, bordered with brown and gold, we read our state motto, *Qui, transiulet, sustinet*. Translated, He who hath transplanted, will sustain. On the staff was attached an exquisite silver presentation plate, suitably inscribed.

This flag became the Connecticut official state flag, and on Aug. 12th, 1897, was presented by our chapter to Governor Lorin A. Cooke at the capitol in Hartford, and shortly after it was hoisted on the staff to the peak of the capitol's dome, where it was saluted by the firing of thirteen guns.

On Aug. 16th, the governor received at Camp Cooke the silk flag for the governors of

the state, from our chapter, Senator Lee spoke of the thirteen stripes, representing the thirteen original states, saying, if the names should be written upon them, Connecticut ought to have her name at the head of the list, because of her noble history; for during the Revolutionary war, more troops were raised from Connecticut than from any other state, with one exception, and during the Civil war she sent about 55,000 soldiers to the front.

at least 10,000 persons were present and it was difficult to get passage across the Thames. A company called "The Ledyard Volunteers," manned the fort, and in the line of march were 18 survivors of the massacre, some showing scars and others with bullet rent garments. One veteran had two holes in his vest which were made on that memorable day in 1781 when he escaped death from the bullets by having a British officer stuff his night cap into



CONNECTICUT STATE FLAG

In June, 1898, Mrs. Slocomb was one of eight Daughters from Connecticut who petitioned Congress against the misuse of the national flag, and in July she was one of the New London and Windham County D. A. R. relief committee for collecting and forwarding contributions to our United States hospital at Jacksonville, Fla., during the Spanish-American war. Our chapter gave in money and materials \$135. On the 6th of September, as usual, a fitting celebration was observed at Groton, it being the 117th anniversary of the battle, which since 1825, 44 years after the massacre, had been commemorated in some proper manner.

Subscriptions were taken at the taverns in Stonington, Groton, Preston and New London to defray expenses, and when the day arrived

the orifice of the wound. These men of Revolutionary days marched with dignity to Fort Griswold, where 1000 women were assembled, and listened to the oration by Hon. William Brainerd. Later Gov. Wolcott was placed at the head of a committee to erect a monument to the honored heroes who fell there in 1781. The money was secured by a lottery, and so this monument was built which stands there in all its grandeur to-day.

And so on, down the years, each succeeding Sept. 6th brings with it some fitting celebration, and patriotic hearts take up willingly the work of keeping green the memory of these brave men who fell at this spot. On the 6th of Sept., 1898, Hon. Benjamin Stark read a paper, which had been compiled by Miss Mary Benjamin, relative to the laying of the corner-

stone of the Groton monument. Mrs. Sara Kinney made an address and Mrs. Slocomb presented a water color painting of the new state flag to Battery B, First Connecticut Heavy Artillery Volunteers.

In October, 1898, Mrs. Whitman, on account of ill health, resigned, and Mrs. Slocomb once more became our leader. In this same month, the monument house, which had been closed several weeks undergoing repairs, amounting in cost to over \$800, was reopened amid interesting ceremonies. A sealed box of records was buried under the main entrance, and after addresses and songs, the flagging was placed over it.

The photographs of the little stone house sold well to its many visitors. It scarcely seems possible, but in the summer months of two years 10,000 persons viewed this historic place. The chapter has distributed many valuable, large water colors and artistic colored photographs of the flags to the military and various libraries and societies at a cost of \$250. We also published a booklet by Miss Benjamin on local history.

Five large volumes, given by Mrs. Slocomb, were filled with a cartoon history of the Spanish-American war, prepared by our historian, Mrs. Ira Hart Palmer of Stonington, and sometime after Miss Emma W. Palmer of Stonington completed a number of volumes of cartoon history of the same war. The C. A. R. did a large amount of relief work during this war and two of their number became soldiers of Uncle Sam.

Our chapter was honored by a request from Washington to have its work, the state flag and monument house, forwarded as a report to the Smithsonian Institution, this being the first report including D. A. R. work, published at the expense of the government. It contained thirty plates, one of which was the monument house.

In 1899, two of our silk flags were presented to the Third Regiment at Camp Lounsbury and in this year, plans were made to add to the monument house, a large hall, 47 by 27 feet and one-third higher than the present building, to be called the Memorial Annex in memory

of our heroic dead of the Spanish-American war, the first monument to be raised in the state to that cause.

At this time, news of the assassination of King Humbert was learned with feelings of sorrow by the world. Our chapter, through the kind thought of Mrs. Slocomb, had Tiffany prepare a most exquisite and appropriate memorial album, with the arms of Italy and illuminated lettering, on delicate white vellum, with silver and gold mountings, containing parchment leaves to be inscribed by the officers and members of each Connecticut chapter, and with the national officers also, expressing to Queen Margherita, of Italy, the love and support of the patriotic American women. The volume was presented by the Countess Di Brazza, who was granted a long and delightful audience at the Queen's court.

Before the Queen's reply had reached us our own beloved President had been shot and was lying wounded unto death. Our chapter sent a letter of sympathy to Mrs. McKinley, and later upon the President's death extended appropriate resolutions.

Mrs. Slocomb made many appeals to Congress to secure the protection and adornment of the old forts, those important relics of the American Revolution, and at last the point was gained. Instead of selling off the guns, ordnance and buildings of Fort Griswold, and then dismantling the fort, the old battleground was converted into a memorial park owned by the State of Connecticut and in care of our chapter. All the guns, eleven cannon and projectiles and 2000 cannon balls were donated to this chapter by the secretary of war, to decorate the park.

Through the hearty co-operation of Miss May Williams of New London our chapter became the custodians of one of Uncle Sam's Spanish-American war trophies, a gun from the Admiral Cervera's flagship, the "Marie Theresa," which fired the first shot in the naval battle of Santiago. So on the western slope of Groton Monument grounds the trophy cannon was mounted on its carriage on a substantial stone foundation, even the shield which protected it on the flagship being sent by the

government. On June 17th, 1902, a great celebration was held in Groton by the Anna Warner Bailey chapter and their friends. Capt. Richard P. Hobson, the orator of the day, was escorted by detachments of the various local national organizations to Groton Heights, where the day proved an unqualified success, from the planting of the Constitutional Oak, by little Cassie N. Bailey, to the unveiling of the gun which Capt. Hobson designated as an old friend, he having helped to raise it from the deck of the *Theresa* after the battle of Santiago. He also said that he

Revolution for the purpose of raising money to purchase land for a monument park. Later Mr. Morton Plant placed there a fountain, as a memorial to Capt. William Latham, who once owned the land, and was in the Revolutionary war at Groton Heights.

At the unveiling of the fountain a most interesting historical paper on the subject was written and read by Master Joseph A. Copp.

Some months after work for the Colonial Dames, relative to describing the old Colonial houses, was taken up by Miss Emma W. Palmer, Miss Julia Copp and myself.



THE MONUMENT HOUSE

would "rather be born a citizen of the United States than a crown prince of the proudest country in the world."

President Roosevelt also having taken much personal interest in saving the old forts to our chapter, a vote of thanks was tendered him with a gift of a large and beautiful basket of red peonies, Mother Bailey's favorite flower.

Shortly after this our regent was appointed a member of the site committee, regarding the proposed Continental Hall to be built at Washington, D. C., and she had the honor of selecting the accepted location, an ideal spot in every respect for this "Home of the Daughters," on 17th St., near the White House.

In August a concert was given under the auspices of the Daughters and Children of the

Our chapter was authorized to erect a memorial annex on the east side of the present monument house, and a committee of six ladies was appointed to supervise Fort Griswold's memorial park. The necessary \$8,000 to accomplish this task, seemed an almost impossible amount to raise. The building was designed to harmonize with the old house and carried on to successful completion with eyebrow windows and a Jonathan Brooks memorial window at the east. Aleoves and fire-proof rooms, with a janitor's room, and cases to hold and protect loaned and donated antiques, were designed for this museum, and much of the furniture was given.

In November, 1903, Fort Griswold which was built by the state, during the Revolution-

ary war and transferred to the United States in 1813, now again became the property of the state. Fort Griswold was no more. Shortly after the C. A. R. and the school children of Groton raised a flag in Fort Griswold Memorial Park, the exercises being attended by our chapter. Afterward, as Mrs. Slocomb's health made it necessary for her to lay aside many duties, she tendered her resignation as regent and Mrs. Clara B. Whitman was elected to the position, which she filled most acceptably.

Mrs. Whitman began her work by asking the war department to turn over to the Fort Griswold Commission, five gun carriages, viz.: Four barbette carriages for 8-inch Rodman gun, front pindle, and one barbette carriage for 20-pounder rifle, front pindle. They were already on the grounds and soon became our property.

In 1904 we note the presentation to the State of Connecticut of a turnstile supported by cobble pillars, placed in the north wall of the lower fort, near the new highway, for the perpetual continuance of a footpath through the forts, from north to south. A handsomely painted sign was also placed at the foot of School street, pointing the way to the monument.

Mrs. Whitman had now an arduous task upon her heart and hands, to raise the necessary \$8,000 and to bring to completion the work of the new annex, together with many other calls for money, among which was the Connecticut column in Continental Hall at Washington, our chapter raising about \$50 for this object. The annual Together Meeting of the Daughters in the state was held at Groton on Oct. 11th, 1905, this day being memorable as the birthday of the national society and the birthday of our patron saint, Anna Warner Bailey.

Our members gave and solicited, while the C. A. R. presented nearly \$1,000, besides the Jonathan Brooks window, which was given by the New London C. A. R. society. The little state button was sold to those who wanted it and to those who did not want it, yielding a large return.

Sentiment culminated in a grand fair, which netted \$200. This, though a great help, was inadequate, and when in October Mrs. Whitman announced to the chapter that the remaining \$2,000 had been given by Mr. Morton F. Plant, great was our rejoicing, as the gift was entirely spontaneous and unsolicited. A tribute of thanks to him should be here recorded by the Anna Warner Bailey chapter, for his thoughtful aid, prompted by his generous heart in this patriotic work. We also record another gift of a memorial plate of blue and white china, designed by John Tolcott Adams, representing Col. Ledyard.

With this load off our minds, attention was directed to raising money for the purchase of the three lots on the east side of the fort, which required as our regent said, "A long pull, a strong pull and a pull all together." At last the annex was entirely completed and the long anticipated opening day, June 28th, 1907, arrived, bringing sunshine and blue skies, for the many guests, who came to do honor, not only to the patriotic dead, but to the patriotic living, who had worked so assiduously for the consummation of this work.

Lest you have never seen the house, let me tell you, that the interior of the building is well adapted to showing the relics. The roof is high and the room well lighted, the walls are decorated with heraldic shields and pictures of historic meaning, while swords, military clothing and apparel of ye olden time may be clearly seen in their cases. As you enter this building, you see our state motto and seal on the eastern wall in gilt letters, between American flags, "He who transplanted still sustains," and on the western wall is the seal of the Daughters, in the blue and silver colors of the chapter against the background of two state flags. With the room full of interesting objects where shall we look first? Be sure and see the three pictures of Mother Bailey at different ages and the portrait of Abigail Hinman. Gaze at the old Avery house and Ebenezer Avery's historic home. In one of the brick fireplaces, see the andirons and crane which once belonged to Mrs. Bailey, and, lest I weary you, go and look for yourself.

Our regent, Mrs. Clara B. Whitman, presented the house to the state, which was accepted in an address by Gov. Woodruff. Afterward Hon. Jonathan Trumbull of Norwich, "a Son of the Revolution," made the historical speech of the day, and the memorial window was unveiled. America was sung with enthusiasm and Groton's place in history was again repeated. Mrs. Whitman has since resigned as regent and the position is now very capably filled by Mrs. Ida Baker.

All you who read this book should hunt the newspaper files of the last fifteen years and read of Groton's patriotic days, including the anniversaries of the battle of Gro-

ton Heights, when our chapter keeps open house, at the new memorial annex and entertains hospitably several hundreds, who view the new room and the many interesting reliques with admiring eyes. These are increasing daily as our citizens realize that here is a safe deposit for their treasures, so that the remark has even been ventured that "our memorial house is not yet large enough."

We see in mind the younger generation, following in the footsteps of their predecessors, by rebuilding and rededicating in patriotic fervor, as members of the Anna Warner Bailey chapter of Groton and Stonington.

## Center Groton

By DAVID A. DABOLL



BROKEN and narrow valley, split into two sections by a central forest covered ridge, sloping irregularly from the southern border of the present town of Ledyard to the broad and open plains upon the sound, forms what may be called the middle section of the Groton of to-day. Its western half is the basin of a river, originally much greater in volume than now, whose waters long furnished power for mills of various kinds, the wheels of which have mostly ceased to turn, or have already crumbled back to dust. In the upper part of the valley, in the shadow of the rocky ridges of Candlewood Hill, which here forms its eastern boundary, lies the little village whose story it is ours to tell. Valley and plains, river and village, all once bore the quaint aboriginal name of Poquonock, but the river, from its sources to tide water, became known in early settlement days as "The Great Brook," a title which has been perpetuated in deed and record, and the village, after having for a century and a quarter fulfilled the conditions which entitled it to its later name of Center Groton, received its belated christening as such, in the fine irony of circumstance, at a date when the reasons for it were passing or had already passed away.

The twentieth century tourist, consulting his road map as he rolls in his automobile along its quiet street, sees little in its relative position and still less in its appearance to justify its name. He does not know and he does not stop to find out, that when the town of Groton comprised an area more than twice as large as it does at present, this spot was, approximately speaking, its geographical center; and that as a corollary thereto it became its ecclesiastical, corporate, and educational center. Two highways running east and west and

north and south respectively, here cross one another at right angles. The first and more important one of the two was, long before the white invasion, an aboriginal trail worn by the feet of generations of savage warriors, and leading from the Narragansett country to the shores of the Pequot river, now the Thames. The second, similar in its origin, led from the open plain around the sound to the Mohegan country at the north. Into each of these at various distances, branching trails, now highways, converged.

"Once churches had towns; now, towns have churches." In this brief sentence, from some forgotten essayist, is to be found an epi-



OLD TAVERN

tome of the reasons for the rise and the decline of many a New England village, which, like this one, still holds its place on the map, although in the expressive phrase of Renan it may have long "lived less than lasted." Here at the crossing of the highways, then hardly more than bridle paths, by means of which the scattered farmers maintained a neighborly intercourse with one another, the founders of Groton, who believed that the only safe pathway to heaven was through the portals of the Established Church, reared the first meeting house in the town, where it could be most conveniently reached by the majority. Close

ly it they built the ruder school house, within whose walls no matter how limited the curriculum might be, the discipline, like that of the church, was complete. Within a stone's throw of the two was the dwelling of the minister, whose rates, fixed by law, were to be collected from believers and unbelievers alike, peaceably, if possible, forcibly if necessary.

Thus they established an ecclesiastical, educational and intellectual center which was likewise to be a corporate center, since the meeting house was to serve as town house also. Doubtless, viewing the situation under fading seventeenth century lights, they expected it long to endure, and in time to draw unto itself the elements which should make it a business and social center as well. Under



DABOLL HOMESTEAD

different conditions, with a different environment, all this might have been. Here and there in New England such an one still lives in something more than name, with its stately "First Church" gracing the spot where the first meeting house stood in Colonial times; with its school house grown to academic or even collegiate proportions; connected by modern highways of iron with the bustling, hustling outer world, still a center of intellectual, social and even of business life.

But not in towns like Groton, whose growth even in its earlier days, was largely along other than agricultural lines, and three-fourths of whose boundaries were washed by the ocean tides. The spirit of commercialism arose and thrrove by the shore. "Dissenters" came in to

disturb the ecclesiastical monopoly and monotony, and vex the souls of those who believed in an enduring democratic theocracy. The bonds which held church and state together grew weaker and weaker and finally snapped asunder.

Then came a time when the center of orthodoxy in the town, like the "Star of Empire," moved westward, and the church at Poquonock, no longer sustained by unwilling taxpayers, moved west with the tide. The hope of the founders was a vanished dream before the generation that succeeded them had passed over to the silent majority. The town had churches in plenty, but the church no longer had the town.

That the site of the place was a clearing somewhat greater in area than now, and cultivated in savage fashion at the time of the white invasion is a matter of tradition fortified by the silent testimony of relics exhumed from time to time even down to the last century. It is probable that the few wigwams scattered along the principal trail went up in flame during the morning of the 26th of May, 1637, a few hours after the storming of the Pequot fortress on Mystic Hill.

The story of that memorable fight is told elsewhere, but a reference to the dramatic march of the victors from the scene of slaughter and victory to their rendezvous on the Thames is permissible here, as in the opinion of the writer, the tacit assumption by historians that the route taken by Captain Mason and his party was in an almost direct course to the western river is an erroneous one. Of the three contemporaneous accounts of the expedition, but one, that of Mason himself, gives even a hint upon the subject, and the hint so far as it goes helps to negative the popular assumption. He had marched, in parts of two days, a distance of nearly forty-five miles over the Narragansett trail already mentioned, and had only turned aside from it when within striking distance of his objective. To return to it when his work was done, and, leaving the remaining fortress of the enemy on the farther side of a deep valley, to effect his retreat (for it was nothing else) along the line of least

resistance to his base of supplies, would have been the dictate of military reasoning and common sense. Crippled in numbers, encumbered with his wounded, his provisions exhausted, and his ammunition nearly so, he was obviously in no condition for further offensive operations. He was guided by native allies whose loyalty was of proof and to whom the whole region was a familiar one. Giving him credit for those qualities of leadership which had won for him "golden opinions" from his superiors in other campaigns, the writer long ago came to the conclusion that his line of retreat that morning took him directly past the spot where, sixty-seven years later, the first church in Groton was erected.

It is probable that the valley again resounded to the tramp of armed men about one month later, when the last collected force of the Pequots which then remained in the vicinity was surrounded and captured in the Pine Swamp a few miles to the north by Captain Stoughton and his Massachusetts troops. Then followed a long silence, one of desolation and death. The region was a part of a conquered country, over which two colonies were to contend for the right of eminent domain, and the conqueror for the most part belonged to that quiet class which a later authority has defined as being "the only good Indians." Eight years were to elapse before John Winthrop the younger, was to appear with his few followers on the western shore of the Thames.

The surviving seventeenth century records of Groton are to be found in the archives of New London, of which it remained a part for sixty years. In the early division of lands east of the Thames those lying in and around Center Groton are unnoticed. They mostly remained in commons until Groton attained her corporate independence. So far as we know no settler made his home there until near the end of the century. Nor is it easy to discriminate chronologically between the very few who came before its status as a town center was fixed, as we have outlined in our introduction, and those who followed soon after. The precise date at which Walter Bodington reared his cabin one-third of a mile north of the

cross roads remains to be defined. The same may be said of Thomas Dunbar, land trader, tavern keeper, and builder and operator of Dunbar's mill on the Great Brook at the west, whose "Big House" just to the east of Bodington's place punctuates the later records here and there. But in the decades between 1660 and 1690 the more easily accessible and more easily tilled if not more fertile lands of the town were not being neglected. The Smiths, the Averys and the Morgans had early made their homes at the lower end of the Poquonock valley, and the time was to come when the descendants of the first two were to be the principal citizens and land holders in the locality with which we are especially concerned.

Along the banks of the Mystic and the Thames and in the more distant "Poquetanock Grants," groups of sturdy pioneers, whose names are of familiar memory had cleared and were cultivating their homestead acres. They were town builders all; it was an era when race suicide was unknown, and new settlers were continually coming in to push farther into the interior of the tract whose periphery only was as yet dotted with their scattered farms.

It is not to be forgotten that "the church had the town," that the absence of any one from the sanctuary at the tap of the sabbath drum furnished a proper subject for judicial inquiry; and that in extreme cases, even the whipping post and the stocks were esteemed appliances with which to persuade men into ways of pleasantness and paths of peace.

Small wonder that as the century drew to a close the desire for a separate and more convenient church establishment, fanned by unreasonable and even minatory opposition, should at last, like the "Spirit of Cathmor" be "stalking large, a gleaming form." There is a touch of grim humor in the petition to the General Court, ignored, denied, and renewed, for the privilege to "imbodye themselves into church estate, in order to the comfortable enjoyment of the ordinances of God." The measure of discomfort involved in winter trips by bad roads and worse ferries to the fireless

sanctuary on the farther side of the Thames we can easily comprehend; and to many of those independent farmers there was an added element of discomfort in the autocratic ministrations of the Reverend Gurdon Saltonstall.

A stately Puritan of the Puritans, an aristocrat to his finger tips, "who felt in himself few of the infirmities of humanity and was intolerant of them in others," the most forceful character of his day and generation, he was unfortunately the champion of the worst as well as the best elements of a dying ecclesiastical system. To his potent influence with the General Court was largely due the failure of the various prayers for a separate church establishment in Groton which were laid before

common lands should be sold or otherwise used for church purposes, and the dwellers east of the river had called as their minister the Reverend Ephraim Woodbridge of Killingworth, a recent Harvard graduate, and born of an unbroken line of clergymen from the days of Wyckliffe down. In the early spring of 1703, a committee appointed for the purpose reported a sale to Thomas Dunbar (already mentioned) of nineteen acres of the public lands for church purposes. The location of the Meeting House was determined as we have seen, and the clearing at Center Groton soon rang with the sound of axe and hammer where there were few to be cheered or disturbed by the echoes.

At its October session the General Court was pleased to ratify these proceedings, and at the May session of 1704, also solemnly approved of an addition of 20 pounds per annum to Mr. Woodbridge's salary, he having agreed to build his own house without further call upon the taxpayers. The foundations of the house were probably already laid, as the young divine had given hostage to fortune on the fourth day of the same month by marrying Miss Hannah Morgan, daughter of one of the "complainants" previously disciplined by Saltonstall. His formal ordination in the new Meeting House took place on the eighth day of November following, and the Church at Poquonock was officially launched upon the ecclesiastical sea. Its history belongs to another pen than ours, as well as that of the rival sect whose apostle was soon to appear upon the field, and whose proselytes were ere long to outnumber the friends of the Standing Order and overturn the system upon which the latter leaned for support; but the story of Center Groton with both eliminated would be but a repetition of that of Hamlet with Hamlet left out.

Of the building, which for more than sixty years was to serve the community as church and town house, no detailed description has been handed down to us, and even its exact site has been a matter of some question. It probably stood a few feet to the east of the now unused store, which last was built long after



CENTER GROTON CHAPEL

it between 1666 and 1703. In 1700 the lash of discipline was applied to sundry recalcitrants, who dared to sign their names, first to a "Complaint" and then to a "Remonstrance" against him and his methods. But even his eyes must have discerned at last the physical if not the spiritual necessity of the case.

In 1702 the town "consented" by vote "that the inhabitants that 'dwell on the east side of the river should organize a church and have a minister of their own at an annual salary of 70 pounds;" and they were further authorized to build a meeting house thirty-five feet square at the joint expense of both sections.

Large bodies move slowly, and before the more ponderous one at New Haven had registered its conclusion in the matter, the town had voted that three hundred acres of the

the demolition of the church in early Revolutionary time. Its dimensions have already been alluded to. It is safe to assume that in its construction few of the graces of architecture were involved either in exterior or interior fittings. It was a square, and doubtless rather ugly looking building, without chimneys, with entrances on its southern and eastern sides, and crowned by the pyramidal or hipped roof then much in vogue. The scanty floor space within was reinforced by galleries upon three sides, the pulpit overhanging by the inevitable sounding board occupying the fourth.

The dignitaries, civil, military or religious, who could afford the luxury, were, by special vote, accorded space, presumably near the pulpit in which to build pews for themselves and families. The first to be thus honored was John Davie, the first town clerk of Groton. The allotment of seats was a task requiring both nerve and judgment on the part of the committee appointed for the purpose, calling as it did for an appraisal of the relative social claims of the worshippers. But the power of the town was behind the committee, and "being so seated" the claimants were warned to "remain silent." A like divinity no doubt hedged about the committee of one, who was charged to "take care of the youth on the Lord's day, that they may not play."

If the maxim propounded by the great French philosopher as to "the nations that have no history" can be applied to churches, the twenty years pastorate of the Reverend Ephraim Woodbridge was doubtless a happy one, as no records of it are known to exist. The occasional reference to him in the civil records touch mostly upon the very worldly matters of life, and as such are not of material interest. He seems to have been popular always, tolerant at a time when intolerance was the rule with the Standing Order to which he belonged, in short, a worthy representative of a class which has been denominated "the moral and religious aristocracy of the town." Unlike his successor he was untroubled by scruples concerning the minister's rates, nor was he hesitant in his requisitions for what at this

day would be accounted unwarrantable favors. The house to which he conveyed his bride, in which his six children were born, and in which in the prime of his years he died, was constructed by him of materials more enduring than those of the Saybrook Platform, to whose harsh provisions he is believed to have accorded but a tacit assent.

After his death in 1725, the house became the property of his successor in the ministerial office, the Reverend John Owen who was like himself a Harvard graduate; a character beloved of all, whose epitaph, "God's faithful seer" seems to have been but a just recognition of the merits of an unusually worthy man. Mr. Owen was ordained in 1727 and died in 1753. The Reverend Jonathan Barber the third and last minister at Center Groton became its purchaser in 1762, four years after his ordination. A Yale graduate, a man not only of liberal education but of liberal tendencies as well, widely known in the land as missionary and reformer, and the close friend and ally of Whitefield, the traditions of more than half a century were properly sustained when he took up his abode under its generous roof tree.

Whitefield visited the place in the summer of 1763, and the spacious grounds of the parsonage were thronged by a congregation which no church in the colony could have accommodated, who came from far and near to listen to the greatest pulpit orator of the century. Mr. Barber was, in the melancholy words of the church records, "taken from his usefulness" in 1765, but dwelt under its roof until his death in 1783, and it remained in possession of his descendants for nearly half a century longer. A parsonage for over sixty years, it has since been by turns inn and farm house, and in the third century of its usefulness it serves in the latter capacity to-day, a visible link between the old times and the new.

Groton became an independent township in the year 1705, and the first town meeting was held at the center in December of that year. On May 28th, 1706, at a similar gathering the crude foundations of an educational system were laid by the appointment of Mr. John

Barnard to be "town schoolmaster." A tract of ten acres of land "northward of the Meeting House" was ordered to be laid out for school purposes, and a "convenient dwelling house sixteen feet square" to be built thereon; "the house and land to be the town's, the benefit to be for the school." Subsidies might be, and were freely voted to clergymen, but not to schoolmasters. On the 11th day of September following, as the result of a deal with the ubiquitous Thomas Dunbar, the vote was rescinded and ten acres "south of the Meeting House" substituted. Yet the traditions are to the effect that the house and lot soon after occupied and improved by Mr. Barnard, as well as the school house later erected, were located in accordance with the original vote.



SCHOOLHOUSE

and so far as the school house is concerned the tradition is certainly correct.

The school master served the town in a peripatetic capacity, for as then constituted it covered an area of more than seventy square miles, and to build a schoolhouse in each of the five sections into which it was divided for educational purposes would have been an unheard of extravagance. The sessions in the central section were held either at "the convenient dwelling sixteen feet square" or at the Meeting House for a time, and the others at the houses of well to do citizens elsewhere, a six months session being in turn allotted to each locality. Mr. Barnard retained his position until 1712, when his name disappears from the records. Little is known of him, but he was probably a descendant of the Barnards of Andover, and it is a fair inference that the

minister was his friend and sponsor. During his incumbency "Mistress Barnard" swept the Meeting House and kept the key, receiving for her services the sum of 20 shillings per annum.

It is difficult to estimate even approximately the compensation received by this educational pioneer for his weary round of services, but it was undoubtedly a meager one, in keeping with the times. A comparison with the liberal allowances made to the minister is naturally suggested, but we forbear.

The date of the erection of the first schoolhouse which was situated a short distance to the north of the Meeting House is uncertain, as is that of its demolition. It lasted however till the beginning of the nineteenth century. The last to teach within its walls was the grandfather of the writer, who dismissed his class rather abruptly one morning, when he found that the big stone chimney had collapsed during the night, completely wrecking the already dilapidated building. So far as known there is no reference in the records to the construction of its successor, which was placed at the foot of the gentle eminence known as Schoolhouse Hill on the west. It did duty for at least three quarters of a century, and as late as 1820 the attendance there was as great as in any district in town. A new and modern building placed near the chapel at the east, succeeded it in 1883, but the old one, converted into a dwelling, still survives.

Save in the periods of excitement which stirred the religious field, the history of Center Groton from its settlement down to the Revolution epoch is an uneventful one. Another pen not less sympathetic than ours has elsewhere traced the rise and progress of the movement tending to church reform, which was begun in 1705, by the Reverend Valentine Wightman, and we pass on with the remark that the leaven of religious liberty was so thoroughly disseminated by the great evangelist that when, long after, the new constitution of Connecticut, which formally divorced church and state, and buried out of sight an already defunct system of parish despotism, was submitted to the people, Groton cast a unanimous vote in its favor. Of the ultimate

effect of the movement on the fortunes of the village we have spoken in our introduction.

The division of the town, in 1725, into two ecclesiastical societies, the northern one corresponding to the present town of Ledyard was another blow at its prestige as a town center. In the tempestuous revival period, historically known as the Great Awakening, and continued in an intermittent way from 1741 to 1744, the two great leaders of the movement Parsons and Davenport, preached there to open air congregations great in numbers, considering the widely distributed population from which they were drawn.

Between 1720 and 1740 there was brisk land trading in which the Avery family, moving up from the lower Poquonock valley along the Great Brook on the west, and the Smiths from the eastern shore of Poquonock Lake, largely participated. Conspicuous in these deals were Thomas Dunbar and Samuel Cunningham who were among the earliest residents in the place. Samuel Daboll from East Hampton, Long Island, became a resident in 1715. Joseph Belton came from Newport about 1725 and commenced buying upon a liberal scale, establishing his home near the foot of Candlewood Hill on the northern side of the post road. Scarcely a trace of its site now remains. Later his son, Jonas Belton, erected the Belton Tavern in the clearing a half mile west of the corners, a building which was one of the landmarks of the region for generations, and finally perished by the torch of an incendiary in 1852.

Houses, mostly of small dimensions, arose on every hand in the suburbs, of which none are left and the names of the occupants even are no longer familiar. At the time of greatest expansion the smoke of nearly a dozen chimneys ascended from as many clearings amid the woods of Candlewood Hill. The forest has for the most part reclaimed its own, and even the deer has returned to browse by the springs whose once generous flow was the prime attraction to the sturdy pioneer.

The Meeting House ceased to be used for church purposes in the year 1768. It was taken down at the beginning of the Revolution, and

a few of its interior panels used in the construction of the dwelling of Charles Smith, now the Daboll homestead, are all that remain of it to-day. With the exception of the venerable parsonage, whose history we have already traced, the latter is now the oldest house in the place. It was purchased in 1805 by "Master Nathan" Daboll of Sergeant Rufus Avery of Fort Griswold fame, and is a house of many memories.

"Master Daboll" whose name is linked in the educational annals of the country with those of Noah Webster and Lindley Murray, was born a few hundred yards to the north and had received a part of his early education at the hands of the Reverend Jonathan Barber, but in the mathematical field in which his reputation was acquired, was a self taught man. He was fifty-five years of age when he settled down in the home which was to shelter him in his later blindness, but his famous Navigation School was continued under its roof by himself and his son Nathan, and in an intermittent fashion by his grandson also. The Almanac issues, begun by him in 1773, have regularly gone forth from its office now for one hundred and four years. Of other associations we may later speak.

The opening of the Revolutionary period found the place shorn of the most of the prominence thrust upon it at the beginning. Equidistant between the church departed on the west, and the already venerable Baptist Meeting House on the east, it was an ecclesiastical center no longer. Nor was it a political center unless the occasional meetings of the town fathers at Belton's tavern had served to keep its title clear. The town had been formally divided into school districts in 1770, of which it was the first in number. In point of attendance it was also the first, but there was no educational center now. It was, in appearance, as it always has been, a straggling village, but the many suburban homes of which we have spoken probably swelled its population to a number greatly in excess of the present one.

No post office was established anywhere in the town until the year 1812. Correspondence was a luxury indulged in by few. The post-

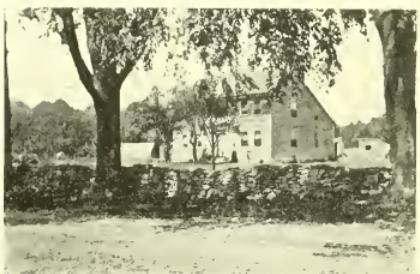
man rode, and the lumbering stages jolted at long intervals over what was now the King's Highway, and tired travellers refreshed themselves at the tavern where "News much older than the ale went round."

Some of the young men were early at the front in the battle for liberty, one or two of them to remain there until the last gun was fired, but it was not till near the end of the strife that its bloody spray was dashed into the very midst of the hamlet. In the battle and massacre at Fort Griswold on the sixth of September, 1781, the town of Groton lost more of her sons in one day than in all the other years of the war put together; and to the list of victims Center Groton contributed her full share. Of seven persons who answered to the alarm guns on that fateful morn-

Corporal Edward Mills answered the summons from what is now known as the "Brown Farm" in the woods beyond the Great Brook northwest of Belton's tavern. Brave Anna Warner, his foster daughter, (the Mother Bailey of later story), hurrying to the fort the next morning, found him still living, and returning to their stricken home, brought his wife to his side to see him die. Peter Avery, aged seventeen, sallied forth from Belton's tavern, probably accompanying Lieutenant Farke Avery, Jr., who took with him also his son, Thomas, another boy of seventeen from their home at Dunbar's Mill on Great Brook at the west. The son early in the action was slain at his father's side; the lieutenant horribly mangled and disfigured by British bayonets, survived his wounds for forty years to die finally in the original Avery home on Poquonock Plains. The boy Peter, taken prisoner returned from the hell of the prison ship, lived long at the Belton place an active farmer and trader, and ended his days in 1845 in the famous old house east of Candlewood Hill long known as the "Harry Niles Tavern" and celebrated as the scene of later "training" and barbecue.

John Daboll, Jr. (whose name is more or less confounded with that of another John, a brother of Master Nathan, who served in the Continental army from 1776 until it was finally disbanded), resided a few hundred yards west of the Great Brook. Wounded in the battle he was saved from death in the massacre through the humane intervention of a British officer whom he was wont to describe in his old age as "The handsomest man I ever saw." "Squire John" was a familiar figure in church and town affairs for forty-four years afterwards.

Our sketch, already too extended, must hasten to its close. From the Revolution down to the present, occasional happenings, not at all exciting in their character, attract the attention of the annalist. The principal, and for a time the only physician of any note in the town, made Center Groton his home early in the nineteenth century, and the house built by him at the junction of the Ledyard and Gale's



THE OLD BARBER HOUSE  
Where Whitefield Preached

ing, but one escaped unhurt, and that one was carried away to face the dangers of disease and starvation on a prison ship at New York.

The oldest victim of the butchery, James Comstock, seventy-five years of age, was a visitor at the home of his son-in-law, Nathaniel Adams, Jr., at the foot of Candlewood Hill. The two went forth together, died together, and in the bitter chaos which followed were buried in a common grave upon the farther side of the Thames. The laurels belonging to the younger of the two have been for generations mistakenly laid upon the grave of Nathaniel Adams, Senior, who took no part in the battle, and who was buried years afterwards among the Gungywamp hills.

Ferry roads is still one of its landmarks, though no one of his name has dwelt in it for more than half a century. Dr. John Owen Miner, grandson of the Rev. John Owen of beloved memory, was a well known figure in his day and generation.

About the beginning of the century the Haley homestead at the corners was built by Russell Smith. It was long an inn before it was purchased by the Hon. Elisha Haley, another prominent citizen, who was both politician and man of affairs for forty odd years.

"Master Nathan" Daboll died at the home-stead in 1818. Three years later his son Nathan, who was all his life a man of affairs, was elected town clerk of Groton. From 1821 to 1837, the town records were kept in his office and from 1839 to 1845 the probate records as well, during his incumbency, first as clerk and later as judge. He also served in both branches of the legislature as did his son, David A. Daboll of honored memory. "Squire Nathan" died in the old homestead in 1863, and his son in 1895.

For a time the lost prestige of Center Groton as a political center seemed likely to be renewed. But an attempt in 1836 to secure it through the erection of a town house near the site of the meeting house of colonial days, was unsuccessful, and the setting off of the Second Society as the town of Ledyard in the same year left it no longer even a geographical center. This was three years after it had received its belated christening by the establishment of its post office on the thirtieth of January, 1833, with Gilbert A. Smith as its first postmaster.

Incidentally we remark that the post office now known as Poquonnoock Bridge, dating from 1841, was first called "Pequot," and

changed its title only after the elder Poquonnoock had had a dozen years in which to get accustomed to the modern name, which for convenience we have applied to it from the beginning of this narrative.

The opening of the Providence and New London turnpike, begun in 1818, made Center Groton a way station upon a busy stage thoroughfare, and the building in the same year of the first woolen mill in the town on the site of Dunbar's Mill, by the corporation known as the Groton Manufacturing Co., attracted numerous operatives, who recruited its dwindling suburban population and revived to some extent its waning trade. The mill did a thriving business for many years, but shut down in the aftermath of the panic of 1837, and was destroyed by fire a few months later.

The post office, after nearly seventy years of varying activity, was finally discontinued on the first day of November, 1902. Two intersecting rural free delivery routes serve to keep the inhabitants of the village in touch with the outside world. The telephone likewise cheers its solitude, but the trolley has passed it by. The state is doing its best for it by making of the long defunct turnpike, whose traffic was diverted by railroad and steamboat more than fifty years ago, a finer highway than the original projectors ever dreamed of. Its neat and commodious chapel suggests that the spiritual interests in whose behalf it was founded over two hundred years ago, are in nowise neglected. It is not, like the "Sweet Auburn" of Goldsmith's melodious numbers, a "Deserted Village;" but one of similar memories, born upon the threshold of a vanishing era; which for obvious reasons has been unable to keep pace with an ever hurrying procession.

## Poquonnoc Bridge

By MRS. CYRUS AVERY and REV. O. G. BUDDINGTON

**T**HE village of Poquonnock Bridge is very pleasantly situated in the southern part of the town of Groton, about two miles east of the Groton and New London ferry, at the head of the river bearing its name. The river connects it with the waters of Fisher's Island Sound, about two miles distant. This stream with its natural beauty, and with its facility for transportation, makes a most desirable location for the village. Added to this the Groton and Stonington Trolley Co.'s line running directly through the village, and the station of the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroad leave nothing more to be desired

on a site near the village and near a house built later which has successively passed through six generations of James Morgans. About the same date Nehemiah Smith came from New London, and built on what is now known as the Smith homestead, near Smith's lake. This house was destroyed by fire during the Revolutionary war, and a great grandson at a later date built over the cellar of the former building, and this house is standing at the present time and is occupied by descendants of the family. Smith's Lake, and Smith's cemetery are familiar sites and date back to those days of long ago.

About the same date of 1652-53 James Avery was granted land situated west of the village and built what has been known as "The Hive of The Averys." The central portion of the house with later additions stood for above 250 years, being destroyed by fire July 30th, 1894. This interesting building was a landmark for generations, and its accidental destruction was greatly and generally regretted. The beautiful Avery Memorial Park and shaft now mark the site of the ancient building. These early settlers were men of sterling character, and occupied prominent places in shaping local and colonial affairs not only in their own localities but in the colonies as well.

Farming, railroading, and sea food production, are among the leading industries. Many large and fertile farms are found in the outlying districts, whose owners maintain them in high efficiency through modern and up to date methods. Probably, what is known as the Gardner farm lying along the east bank of the river extending from its head to the sound, is the largest in the county, if not in the state.

Railroading is a more recent industry, having been introduced with locating the extensive freight yards of the New York, New



SCHOOLHOUSE  
Oldest in Town

by transportation facilities. The population consists of about one hundred families, for the most part consisting of resident, English speaking people, there being but an exceedingly small per cent of foreign element, offering a most favorable contrast to the modern New England village.

As far as can be ascertained the first settlers in what is now the village of Poquonnock came from New London in the year about 1652-53. About this time Mr. James Morgan occupied a grant of land and built a house

Itaven and Hartford railroad about the station which has been changed from Poquonnock to Midway as it is about half way between New York and Boston. In addition to the freight yards, the erection of a round house, coal pocket, ice house, and hotel has furnished employment for hundreds of men many of whom make their homes in the village.

From time immemorial Poquonnock river and the adjacent waters of the sound have been

reaches back to its earliest settlement. Here Elder Park Avery established a "New Light Congregational Church" in the days of Whitefield and his zealous coadjutors. The church declined as he grew old, but religious efforts were continued.

After a time a Sunday school was established and maintained which has continued to this day. The church which grew out of the Sunday school was constituted August 18th,



POQUONNOCK BRIDGE AND CHURCH

noted for their abundant supply of sea food, both scale and crustacean. This has furnished occupation for many, and members of certain families have followed it through successive generations until the highest skill and success has been attained. Of more recent date the culture of oysters has been introduced by private enterprise through the laying out and stocking of beds in the river.

The history of Poquonnock Bridge Baptist Church as such begins with the year 1856, but the history of the Christian work on this field

1856, with twenty-five members. Rev. S. B. Bailey was the first pastor, and continued with them about eighteen months. The next was Rev. George Mixter followed by Revs. Alfred Gates and John E. Wood who raised a company of volunteers and went with them to the war. Next comes Rev. Thomas Dowling followed by Revs. Curtis Keeney and William A. Smith.

Through the earnest faithful work of members, with the help of outside friends, the money was raised for a new and larger church

edifice, dedicated November 8th, 1871, with Rev. Louis Sands as pastor. He was succeeded by Elders William A. Smith, Stephen Perkins, E. C. Miller, George W. Pendleton, C. E.

The church has a handsome Avery memorial window presented by Jeremiah Harris of Groton, whose mother was Mary Avery Harris. The fiftieth anniversary of the organiza-



OLD AVERY HOMESTEAD

Tullar, N. T. Allen, and F. H. Cooper. Rev. O. G. Buddington the present pastor was a Groton boy, a graduate of the Mystic Valley

Institute in 1877. He supplied the church from 1903 to 1907, when he accepted a call to the pastorate.

The church was appropriately celebrated August 10th, 1906.

The present number of members is 122. The



AVERY MEMORIAL PARK

Institute in 1877. He supplied the church from 1903 to 1907, when he accepted a call to the pastorate.

officers are as follows: Clerk, Daniel Morgan; deacons, Cyrus Avery, William T. Burrows, Charles C. Palmer; treasurer, Cyrus Avery.

A good graded school, well filled with pupils, with a building centrally located is one of the indispensable accessories to the intellectual

probate judge, selectmen, with a large hall for public meetings, and is thoroughly up to date in its construction, and appointments.



RESIDENCE OF THE LATE ELISHA SEABURY THOMAS

Called "High Rock Place" and situated at the head of the Eastern Point and lower Ponquomoe road. Mr. Thomas purchased this land in 1865 of Park William Avery, being the southern portion of the farm known as "Birch Plains," and named it from the ledge on the rise of ground.

"On which High Rock like a grim giant stands  
Covered with moss and seamed by glacial spars,  
As it hath stood through all the centuries."

The land has always been owned by a descendant of Captain James Avery, to whom it was granted in 1652.

life of the village. The erection of a new school house at present is an agitated question.

A beautiful and commodious town hall has

A race track with all necessary accompaniments for athletic sports and a rifle range established by the state, for the practice of the State militia, are among the many acquisitions.



GROTON TOWN HALL

recently been erected at a cost of above \$25,000, through the generosity of Mr. Morton E. Plant, a resident of the town. This magnificent building contains offices for town clerk,

tions, pointing to a desirable and central location, and to an extensive outlying domain, by no means yet exhausted, but invitingly open to future enterprise and growth.

## Picturesque Noank

By MARY E. BURROWS

**N**OANK lies on the N. Y., N. H. & H. railroad, seven miles east of New London, on the point reaching out to the waters of Long Island sound, where the Mystic river empties into them. The scenery is some of the most picturesque on the Atlantic coast. At the south lies the broad expanse of blue water of Long Island sound, broken at the southern horizon by Fisher's Island as a sky line for the immense picture. Between that and the main land are dropped here and there

Noank, or "Nauyang," has no hazy history, but clear cut and defined from the days of 1614, six years before the landing of the Pilgrims. This was the summer camping ground where the Pequots came from their interior winter quarters above Mystic and Fort Hill (then Pequot Hill). Their nets, made of wild hemp, set across the north cove, gathered in the plentiful supply of fish, or from their canoes they speared them, and caught the other game of the waters. The whole long summer they roved independent and happy, gorging



NOANK GENERAL VIEW

smaller islands of various shapes and formations, some like round, green dumplings, some of solid rock, barren but grand, and some with rank vegetation with dwelling houses showing their bright colored roofs amongst the verdure. The widened mouth of the river forms a broad, safe harbor, and with the deep channel makes Noank's shipping facilities of great value. This is the "Nauyang" of old Indian days, meaning according to Prof. Eno of Yale, "a point of land."

themselves with the good things of the salt waters provided by nature in such bountiful quantities. Then, when the autumn came, back again inland where their corn had been growing all this while, back to business again, like other summer sojourners of modern times, to their idling, hunting, their intriguing, and preying on their brother neighbors. And Nauyang was left to its fall beauty, its stillness and solitude, with only nature's own noises. The trees whispered softly, the small game

scuttled here and there in search of food; the squirrels chattered or scolded at each other as the case warranted, while they cunningly tucked their winter stores in the trunks of trees or the ground. The birds called each other together for their winter migration, and took their southward flight, and Nauyang was so still, so calm, so beautiful, while the blue waters of the great ocean rolled in through Wicopeasette and broke with a swish—swish—lap—lap on the east shore. And on the west shore of "the point of land," it gurgled in and out among the rocks, then ran laughing out

come down from Ledyard with their baskets for sale.

In the lottery, the point where the lighthouse stands was drawn by James Morgan, hence its name, Morgan Point light. The land where the little old house stands, the home of Rev. A. J. Potter, and owned by his grandfather, Thomas Potter, in Revolutionary times, was drawn by John Davie first town clerk of Groton, who afterwards succeeded to his title, Sir John Davie, and returned to England to his title and estates.

As the arrival by water is much more beau-



STREET SCENE

again to the cove, and found its way to the sound. Nauyang, ever beautiful, whether in the year 1614 or Noank of the 1900s.

After the raid of John Mason on the Pequots, and their dispersion, some of them finally wandered back to Nauyang, where they settled with "Cassasimamon" as their chief, until 1667, when they were sent to a reservation in the town of Ledyard. The land, in 1712, was drawn by the whites by lottery, allowed and sanctioned by the Hartford assembly. The Indians were granted the right of hunting and fishing at Nauyang as before, and as late as 1857 would make summer camp there for a short time, and in the early 60s

tiful than the prosaic way by railroad or by trolley, let us trim the sail, put up the tiller, and round lighthouse point, the extremity of "the point of land," and take a general view of the coast line of the town, which is built on both sides of a hilly ridge running northward about one mile. The shore line furnishes the best view of the industries of the place, so we will sail to the north dock and begin our observations from there. As we swing slowly to the wharf, we find that all is bustle and hurry, for some of the most hustling captains of the community have just arrived with large cargoes of fish to be iced and prepared for shipment to New York. The wharf presents

a grand mix-up of rubber boots, squirming and flopping fish, ice, barrels, big strong hands and jokes. Every moment now must count that they may catch the next train out. In a few hours time you may see these same men lounging like lords of leisure, or slowly spinning some sea yarn, as though there was no hurry in the world; but now it means get their fish to market, the sooner the better, the more money to them.

The cargoes of these vessels, with things favorable, represent a financial value of \$5,000 or \$6,000, while their running expenses will amount to \$200 a week, a good reason for hustling. Some of their largest cargoes are taken

there, too, all are intensely busy. We will step over there and see what enterprise they are promoting. We can just run across lots at the end of the wharf here, for everyone in Noank goes across lots when they choose. Here we find a small marine railway for the use of smaller vessels to haul out on for painting, scrubbing the bottoms, caulking or any slight repairs. A minute more we are at that "other wharf." The man in the "seven league" boots, with a long-handled scoop net, is taking the green, snapping, fighting lobsters from a great car at the head of the dock, where they have been stored until they disgorged the bait they so greedily devoured, wholly indifferent to the



SHORE SCENE

directly to New York in their vessels, others shipped as described. Could we turn our gaze backward from thirty to sixty years and view the shores, wharf and harbor, we would see a small city of masts, which belonged to the fishing fleet, then flourishing. From seventy-five to one hundred vessels went out and came in, making their trips to New York for their market. Many of those old captains have made their last port, and cast their anchors in the long haven of rest, and only their cosey little homes, so lovingly built by them, remain as their memorial. The younger generation have taken up other business, and the present numbers of the fleet are much less, though the business is very profitable.

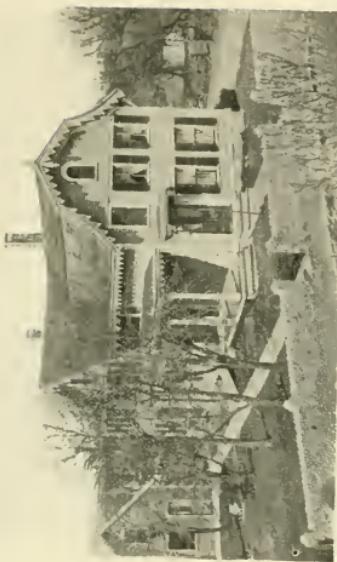
From here the next wharf can be seen and

state of freshness or putridness it might have been in, or waiting until the proper time for New York shipment. These are scooped into large baskets, swung on to a set of immense scales to be weighed, then packed into barrels with ice, still fighting, grabbing at anything or any one. A fellow lobster caught in the great claw is relentlessly snapped, his claw crushed to atoms, or a careless handler will have as nearly the same treatment as said carelessness will allow. Here are agents of New York firms buying from the lobstermen, such as wish to dispose of their catch in that way, while others send directly to dealers in the metropolis, or in near by cities.

The amount of capital invested in the lobster business each year in Noank is very con-

*HISTORIC GROTON*

59



RESIDENCE OF CAPTAIN BENJAMIN W. LATHAM



RESIDENCE OF CAPTAIN MOSES A. FISH



RESIDENCE OF MR. HARRY A. ANDERSON



RESIDENCE OF MR. CHARLES H. SMITH

servatively placed at \$40,000. In early years those in the business depended entirely on sail to reach the lobster ground, subject to the freaks of wind and tide. In 1893, A. V. and his brother, Wayland Morgan, made a departure by introducing steam in their sail boats, using a hollow mast, which served as a smoke-stack. This proved a success, as the pots could be hauled by steam. Later, gasoline motors were installed, and now are the universal custom, and in the "wee sma'" hours of morning, from two a. m. and on, according to the time of tide, one may sleepily hear the pop-pop of the motors, as they start upon their day's business, and we turn over in bed to finish our comfortable morning sleep. After the lobster season, these boats fish until about Dec. 1st, shipping to the cities.

A short walk to the south, or, if you prefer, a row boat, as the distance is hardly worth getting the sail boat under way again, we come to the beginning of those fighting, grabbing, disgusting looking, but delicious tasting, lobsters, the Connecticut state hatchery, presided over by Capt. Latham Rathbun, established for the purpose of artificially supplying the waters of the sound, so rapidly being depleted by the immense demand and consumption of the crustacean. It is intensely interesting to note the process. The work begins in May and lasts until about the third week in July. A tank is built in the upper story of the house, and the sea water from the east end of the building (which is built with a door opening directly on to the water), is pumped by gasoline or electricity into this tank. A large pipe leads from the tank down to the ground floor, connecting with small pipes running the water into glass jars holding about two gallons, standing on a long table for that purpose, also to a receiving tank from there, and out again to the ocean waters from whence they came. The mother lobster, which is bought by the state superintendent, and is protected by law for its spawn, is now relieved of the eggs by the hand and carefully separated from a lump that the water may revolve each separately. These are now placed in glass jars, one half million of them to a jar,

and the water turned on, the force being regulated by a small valve at the bottom of the jar, that the eggs may revolve at a certain speed. The water running in forces that already there over into the receiving tank, causing a never ceasing rotary movement to the eggs that hatches the small lobster, which rises at once to the top and is floated over into the tank. These are about one-third of an inch long at that time, and immediately begin their life work of eating. They are taken away almost immediately and emptied into the waters of Long Island sound.

On experimenting as to keeping them until larger and better able to care for themselves, it was found that in about three weeks they were in the fourth stage, that is, about three-quarters of an inch in length, beginning to form shell, and perfect in shape. It is imperative at this stage that they should be turned out to provide for themselves, as they will die if they are kept longer. The forming of their shells gives them weight, which sinks them to the bottom, and they naturally require heavier food. Four to five years complete the growth to the lawful market size—nine inches. One season's hatchery brings out fifty million young lobsters, which would seem on a fair way to restock the waters, but their minute size at time of putting them overboard causes great loss, as many are eaten by larger fish, and only a very small proportion mature.

On our way here from the lobster wharf, we passed by the firm of J. H. Paine & Sons, Inc., builders and repairers of steam and gasoline engines, marine and stationary, also their galvanizing plant, the whole with a capacity of twenty men. The sail loft of Mrs. J. Palmer Williams does a steady, lucrative business each year.

There are four firms for building small boats, of which Jeremiah Davis is the veteran builder of them all. Late years, these are about thirty to thirty-two feet long, with twelve to fourteen feet beam. From that size they vary to skiffs of ten or twelve feet, also to motor launches. This enterprise of the village amounts in financial results to over \$12,000 a year, running to about \$15,000 some years.

The shipyard of R. Palmer & Son Co. is in the lower part of the village, towards the "Lighthouse" point and extending well on to the "Narrows." This is one of the largest wood shipbuilding plants on the Atlantic coast, and employs about four hundred men. The shipyard was opened in 1851 by John Palmer, who was ordained deacon of old Fort Hill church in 1821, and later served the Noank church in the same capacity, when it was formed in 1843, till the time of his death. After his death, his two sons, John and Robert, succeeded to the business under the name of R. & J. Palmer.

at the expiration of seven years' service in that capacity, the records show he had cradled five hundred vessels safely without a mishap or error attributed to his work. As the years advanced and his son, Robert, Jr., came to maturity, he became a member of the firm and it became Robert Palmer & Son Co., each Robert having his special department, but making a united whole. New methods of doing work called for modern machinery, which was installed as the occasions demanded until at the present date it is one of the finest equipped yards in the country.



THE SHIPYARD

Nothing seemed too difficult for these two men to attempt to haul out on their marine railways and they always ended in success. The work enlarged until the death of the older brother John, a man of sterling worth and loyal Christian character, when it became the business of Robert Palmer. Under his management the ever increasing business called out the natural abilities and executive qualities he possessed. The marine railways have been under the direction and superintendence, for a number of years of Charles R. Palmer, only surviving son of John Palmer, the former member of the firm. His record does honor to the older members and their training when,

Suppose we take a walk round the yard and see many things new to us and immensely interesting. This long red shop is the oldest building. In the upper story we find the floor covered with strange lines, which to us seem only a confused mass, meaning nothing at all; but there stands a short, heavily built, oldish man with short, gray hair—Mr. Leddyard Daboll, who tells us, "that is the drafting of some new vessel," and he certainly ought to know, for he has drafted on these same floors for many a long year, he says over fifty, and the years have used and touched him kindly.

Now here in this room, begin those vessels

on the stocks which we can see from the windows, looking toward the north, south and west. Vessels of various kinds and in different stages of progress meet the eye. There



SCHOOLHOUSE

is the stanch little aggressive tug boat, built to breast all kinds of weather and hardship of life, its only object to get there with its tow. There is the dapper, spick-span, dandy yacht, like a society belle, designed only for pleasure and will sail the world over to find it; also the steamboat of a passenger or freight line combining some of the elements of both the others. Then the just useful, without beauty, the railroad floats and coal barges. But the wonder of their construction and their great clumsy dignity of usefulness, strongly appeal to one as he goes from one to another watching the different stages and workmanship.

Here is one just begun by laying the keel; then comes the square body frame which is set up beginning at the middle of the craft and worked towards either end; then the kilson, cants, stem and stern post, next the ceiling or inside planking and the deck. A large iron band, six inches by three-quarters inch in thickness, is then bound round the top, and iron bands, three and one-half inches by one-half inch in thickness run down the sides diagonally and cross diagonally, thus forming a stay of iron in form of diamonds over the entire body of the vessel. The frame is cut away for these so when they go into place they are flush. This is one of the most interesting

stages, such provisions of strength, and resistance for weight, weather and endurance.

As the outside planking begins, the salting begins. Usually at this announcement a smile of incredulity creeps over the countenance of the uninitiated, thinking they are being guyed, but a great quantity of salt is poured in as the planking proceeds. This is to preserve the wood. The outside planking is of planks of 4 to 7 inches, which are spiked with galvanized spikes 8 and 10 inches long, also trenails driven through from outer to inner planks fastened at both ends with wedges driven in, butt bolts riveted at the end, and every condition for strength attended to. The caulking is also interesting. We see the men open the seams with an iron, and oakum, which is slightly twisted, similar to candlewick but the size of a man's wrist, is forced into the opened seam and driven in until the oakum is as solid as the plank itself and thoroughly water tight. The planers follow the caulkers as they work.



BAPTIST CHURCH

The searchers look things all over for holes, rents, bad places in planks and search out any imperfection. They must be thorough, honest, trusty, perfect in their knowledge of their bus-

iness. Now come the painters and the general finishing. The boats are then thoroughly watered to test or find any leak. This may last three or four hours, going up one side, then the other.

It is now time to prepare to launch by putting ways under, which are slightly inclined planes slushed with tallow mixed with oil, on which the vessel slides to her future element. This plant for several successive years has av-

Down below are great knees of 8 and 9 inches in thickness carefully marked in the shape desired. These are placed on the table and a saw so small and slender it looks incongruous is poised above the depth of clumsy wood bulk under it, but a hand regulates the force, and hands guide the clumsy piece with its marks exactly to the saw, and with another little shrill shout the saw ploughs its way exact to the line, and a knee is turned out



SUMMER RESIDENCE OF THE LATE MR. ELIJU SPICER

eraged a vessel constructed and launched every ten days. The gross income in panic year was \$741,000.

While we are waiting for the tide to touch the highwater mark, just stroll round to the different houses where the various parts are prepared and made ready for their respective places. Here is the sawmill where the immense logs are sent on the great carriage to be trimmed into shape. They roll along to the saw which strikes them with an angry, exultant scream, as it buries itself in the huge bulk, and with a yell runs its entire length.

as neatly as the shears would cut a pasteboard card. That one there, is where the trenails are sawed. A square stick of locust about 22 inches in length by one and one-eighth inches square, is fed to the hungry brute. Behold! he grabs it, the belt swings round and one schnist! and a smooth, round trenail is the result which goes to fasten that planking. One man turns 1800 of these trenails a day. So the numerous saws do each its own work.

Over there is the blacksmith shop. The roar of the flames and the clank! clank! of the anvil is turning out those iron bands with which the

vessels are strapped and the other iron work required. There is a funny looking box thing and they are steaming planks to make them pliable to bend into place over a bulging frame. There is a most picturesque frescoed little building near the shore, the most artistic of them all. A few panes of glass missing from the window in the peak and daubs of all colored paints forming a rich dado as high as a man can reach without a ladder, red, yellow, etc. That is the paint shop. Then we visit the power house, that furnishes all the force that performs these wonderful things.

The tide is now about full and the click-et-click of the men at work under the bottom warn you to get your place for viewing the launch. The rapping of those men tightening up the wedges is very exciting to an onlooker, and causes them to wish they could do something, too. A little lull in the click-et-click, then it comes again, "Did you see her move?" No, not yet. Click-et-click! "There she goes!" Some boy has noticed a slight advance from the marked line, "There she goes!!" from the older ones, and "Hurrah!!" from the spectators and workmen. Every whistle in the yard and every saucy little motor boat in sight (like the proverbial small boy, always around ready to scream at the chance) send out their three times three, Hurrah! Amidst the great jargon of good cheer, she slides over the tallow and oil, ploughs down into the water, and as the water buoys up the full length of her, she makes a graceful bow to the audience and the firm that has caused her being, and floats out for the mission for which she was built. The shipyard is certainly worthy a visit, and the time is well spent in gaining much information as well as pleasure.

On the brow of "Store Hill," (for in old days the general variety and grocery stores were at the foot of this hill, nearly at the head of the town dock, that they might conveniently supply the vessels as they came in), turning to the right and walking through the deep lawn, we approach the Baptist church, the oldest religious body in the place. It is of very plain architecture, painted white, but its tapering spire with its situation on the hill, give it a

picturesque effect. Far out on the waters of the sound, or back into the distant country hills, that slim white spire can be seen, pointing upward, seeming to pierce the blue skies and clouds. This church is a daughter of the old Fort Hill meeting house, and grand-daughter of Old Mystic church, the first Baptist church formed in this part of Connecticut. The Noank Baptist church was formed in 1843, though it is so intertwined with the old Fort Hill church as to have actually begun its existence eighty years previous. Its independent existence began with two hundred and twenty-three members, of which one hundred were converts of the meetings held by Elder Jabez Swan in Mystic a short time before. There are nine of those members still living.

Its history has been at times almost dramatic, and at all times has it been as salt savoring the community. We can here hardly touch on its power for good. There has never been in the history of Noank the open sale of liquors, or intoxicants allowed. Public opinion, so impregnated with the influence of that church's teachings to the young, and their parents' inheritance before them, is such that they rise unseated and alarmed at such sales in their midst. Many times it has been attempted, and some times carried on surreptitiously for awhile, but as soon as proof could be obtained, it was stopped. The present house of worship was built in 1867, at a cost of \$12,000, having a seating capacity of about four hundred. Since that time, improvements have been made as times and conveniences have demanded, and at present it is lighted by electricity, has a fine modern pipe organ installed at the cost of \$2,500, is heated with hot air, has a baptistry with water supply, a well equipped kitchen, and a large Sunday school room.

The Methodist church was formed as a chapel, partially dependent on the conference for support, in the year 1878. After years of using what was known as the chapel, it became advisable to build a better and larger house, which was done in 1903. They have now an auditorium with a seating capacity of two hundred and fifty to three hundred, fitted with modern improvements. A well equipped kitch-



RESIDENCE OF MR. JOSEPH SEARING, "COVE NOOK FARM"



CATHOLIC CHURCH



EPISCOPAL CHURCH



RESIDENCE OF JUDGE ARTHUR P. ANDERSON

en, and Sunday school rooms are below the main auditorium. The total value of house and furnishings is about \$7,000. The same year was built a Protestant Episcopal and also a Roman Catholic church.

1843, it was used for meetings when occasion called, funerals being held there, as well as prayer and preaching services. Many now living have a reverential feeling for the school house which now stands with its modern front



BY THE WATER SIDE

The schools, both District No. 11 in the centre of the village, and District No. 6 in upper Noank, are so closely allied to the Baptist

and back added to the "big and little" parts of other days, which interpreted meant the rooms of the big and little children, or the senior and



"AN EXQUISITE RETREAT," ON THE G. & S.

church history as to be part and parcel with it in interesting reminiscences and personal spiritual experiences. The school house of No. 11 was built in 1837, and from that time until

primary grades. The school house has now five rooms with grades and classes up to date, presided over by teachers who efficiently hold them up to the required standard, and when

students are admitted to the high schools of other towns they take an advanced place, some of them nearly ready for the sophomore year.

District No. 6, upper Noank, carries the religious remembrances still further back to nearly a century. It has always been called "the old school house." Before District No. 11 was formed and the house built, those who have passed to the great beyond, but would have long passed the century mark at this time, wearily plodded over the hills with their little dinner pails from lower Noank on the shores, to that school, for their meagre advantages of learning to read and write. Our great grandmothers, at four or five years of age climbed those hills, more than a mile, to school, and stopped to rest at the same house one of them



METHODIST CHURCH

went to live in afterwards with her young husband, which was her home until she died at nearly ninety-one years of age. She could tell of seasons of great religious blessings in the old school house, of prayer meetings and searching sermons. A musically inclined member discoursed on the singing schools, when the singing began to improve from the

old habit of "lining off" from the one red hymn book held by the minister, while he gave them line by line to sing. The old house has



LIGHTHOUSE

been removed, and a modern one takes its place, with modern methods of teaching and an up-to-date teacher. Though it is a mixed school it arrives at a good grade of scholarship and has no reason to be ashamed.

We will return over the hills our great grandmothers trudged as they went and came from school. The view from hill to ocean is just as beautiful, but the world has moved strangely and wonderfully the last century, and now we see from those hills the convenient trolley car gliding along the highway each half hour, connecting Groton with Westerly, R. I., and sounding its triumphant little whistle as it slips out of sight around some curve.

A visit to the railroad station next. The telegraph operator is ticking at his machine, the freight agent is booking freight; fish, lobsters and general freight are going out. Flat cars are coming in loaded with lumber from the south, lumber from Oregon ordered months ago, knees from Sault St. Marie, Mich., floor timber from Nicollette, West Va., treenails from Canada, and lumber from other points near by. Immense anchors, their mammoth chains, coils of hempen hawsers that call out an exclamation of wonder at the size, cavernous iron water tanks, etc., all for Palmer & Son Co., shipbuilders. Then there is the freight for the numerous grocery stores, markets and other stores. We find the amount received for freight in one month to be \$7,000, at others



TROLLEY SCENE

\$5,000 and \$6,000. Amount received for passenger tickets to have been \$1,500 a month before

There are two well equipped hotels for summer visitors. The Ashby house in the lower part of the village accommodates about fifty guests, and The Palmer in the upper part of the village entertains from sixty to seventy-five visitors. Artists from the large cities find abundant material in the beautiful scenic surroundings for their winter art exhibitions, which bring them fame and golden shekels, or gold certificates of Uncle Sam's, meaning prosperity in the world's goods.

Quiet, unassuming Noank, making but little pretensions of its benevolent deeds and charitable acts, though always ready to answer the call for sympathy of the great outside world, in its poverty and the distress of its poor. From the beginning, alert to answer the call of its country in the conflicts of the Revolution and the war of 1812, while the call of the Civil war to save the unity of the nation rallied the young men to its defence in enthusiastic numbers, and gave their native village an honorable mention among men by their noble service to and for their country.

## The Work of Fanny Ledyard Chapter, D. A. R.

By MARY E. BURROWS

**T**HE pioneer chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in the town of Groton was the Fanny Ledyard Chapter of Mystic, Old Mystic and Noank. It was formed June 8, 1893, the chapter number being 10. It was also the second chapter in the United States to appoint a chaplain among its officers, who opens each meeting with religious exercises.

To Mrs. Eliza A. (Miner) Dennison belongs the honor of the first membership and the early promotion of the chapter. She was accepted by the national board as a member and appointed regent of "A" chapter April 1, 1893, endorsed by Mrs. DeB. Randolph Keim state regent of Connecticut, her national number being 2906. As regent of "A" chapter the responsibility was placed on her of forming that chapter, and she immediately began her work of securing eligible members. The first member of the chapter was Mrs. Eliza (Dennison) Brown of Noank whose name comes on the charter following the regents as number two. In a short time she had the required number for the charter (thirteen) and three more for good measure, making a roll call of sixteen for the beginning. These papers were sent to Washington the middle of April and accepted by the national board June 1, 1893.

The first regular meeting was held June 8, 1893, at which time came the choosing of a name. Several names were proposed when from one corner came a whisper, from as quiet and unassuming a gentlewoman as our chapter heroine herself, to one of the ladies nearer the front row, "Why don't you name it Fanny Ledyard? She was the first to give aid to the suffering victims of Fort Griswold?" The front row lady, Mrs. Sarah (Burrows) Buckley, audibly voiced that whisper and the name thus proposed was unanimously adopted.

Fanny Ledyard was reincarnated and lives again to do deeds of mercy and kindness in the chapter which bears her name, and the



D. A. R. CABINET

Cabinet and frame of charter, made of wood from Fanny Ledyard's house; upper shelf, picture of "White Hall" gates; second shelf, picture of Hartford bridge; third shelf, Fanny Ledyard's plate, old hand woven linen and bundle of flax; fourth shelf, books of D. A. R.

name was chosen for us by the honored school-teacher whom so many have risen up from her ministrations to call blessed—Miss Ann Augusta Murphy.

The first taking up of the practical work of the chapter was on September 6th, to commemorate the massacre at Groton Heights at the old fort, with invited guests from the chapters of New London and Norwich. Ever since that date as the year rolls round, the day has been observed, and "the memory of the spirit of those heroes and heroines of that dreadful day is perpetuated and newly aroused in each heart which attends these anniversaries. February 22 has always been celebrated with but one exception in the fifteen years—a perpetuation of the spirit of that great leader—the magnanimous Christian gentleman and the Moses of our country. Patriotic and literary exercises and colonial teas bring to mind the habits and costumes of "ye olden times," and each time arouse a new interest in historical research as to what and how our grandsires did and lived.

One early call to the chapter was not to protect historical soil but to help make such. In the far state of California where no Revolutionary soil can be found, the Sequia Chapter planted a Liberty tree and sighed for historical soil for its growth; a call was made for contributions from each chapter and that from Lexington was the first trowel full placed round its roots; then across the broad Atlantic came that from the grave of Lafayette, and so on, from the various and far aways came the soil which gives growth to that tree. The Fanny Ledyard chapter sent hers from the grave of their patron saint in Southold, L. I., and so historic and revolutionary soil like the spirit has spread, and found a rich abiding place in the beautiful, bountiful Golden State.

Soon after this a fund was started for a tablet to commemorate the loving deeds of Fanny Ledyard in ministering to the wounded and suffering of the battle of September 6th, 1781. In June, 1895, the tablet was finished and placed on her grave. A delegation of the chapter with several Sons of the American Revolution accompanied by others not of either organization visited Southold and held dedicatory services appropriate for the occasion and its presentation to the village. The tablet was accepted by Rev. Dr. Whittaker in behalf

of the village. Visits are frequently made to the spot to pay respect and to keep an oversight as to its condition. When the house where our heroine had always lived was removed, Dr. Whittaker saved some of its time stained oak and forwarded it to the chapter, from which was made a carved frame for the charter, and a cabinet in which to preserve relics.

Another historical monument is the pair of gates at the old Whitehall burying ground just above Mystic, where Revolutionary patriots rest with the families of old Colonial sires. The grounds were cared for and put in order, stones righted and work finished by placing fine iron gates at the entrance.

Markers for the graves of Revolutionary patriots were obtained from the generous Sons of the American Revolution, and one lone hero of Groton Heights sleeping about a mile from Noank was tenderly remembered, his grave made orderly and a marker placed there for David Palmer.

A contribution was made towards the purchase of Putnam's wolf den at Pomfret, Connecticut.

April 7, 1897, the chapter became a member of the Mary Washington Association, the badge of membership to be worn by each regent while holding that office. To encourage historical research socials were organized for such study, papers were written, original poems composed, and so mind and heart were opened to the work before them. As the work of the chapter grew and so much was done for the country's good by its women, this work assumed other forms and the literary work came in at regular meetings and special anniversaries. Among their cherished members have been three real daughters, Mrs. Nancy Lord Stanton, Miss Mary Ann Wheeler, Mrs. Abbyline Starr. These were each presented with the gold spoon given to real daughters.

Miss Abigail Ledyard of Southold, L. I., great grand niece of Fanny Ledyard, is an honorary member of our chapter.

Many historical spots have been visited. One trip which stands out in bold relief is that to Lebanon, Conn., June 17, 1896, by invita-

tion of the S. A. R. to dedicate the bronze tablet in the little old war office in Jonathan Trumbull's grocery store.

Article 2nd of the constitution reads: "To promote as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge," a quotation from Washington's will. Under this heading we place first, as homage to the distinguished author, a contribution to the "National University" fund of Washington. Contributions to the Southern Educational Association for the education of the mountain whites; for a scholarship of the Connecticut Literary Institute at Suffield, and two prizes to the Mystic high schools for the best historical essays on the battle of Groton Heights, have been given.

The insignia of the Daughters is a seal of American womanhood. It immediately establishes a bond between the wearers reaching out to sociability and good fellowship; consequently this chapter has always extended most cordial welcome to any visiting Daughter in this community and is always pleased to be addressed by her on the work of her home chapter. From time to time they have given to some prominent official to whom they wished to pay their respects, receptions reaching through the state to each chapter regent or her representative. Such honor was paid Mrs. DeB. Randolph Klein, state regent, on two occasions, to Mrs. Sarah T. Kinney, state regent; to Mrs. Agnes (Martin) Dennison, vice-president general of national society and previously registrar general; to Mrs. Donald McLean, regent of New York City chapter and later to her as president general of the national society.

These were one and all brilliant functions made so by artistic decorations of flags, the insignia, flowers, roses and ferns, gorgeous foliage, music, beautiful gowns, gentle women, their husbands and sons, with entertainment of wit, wisdom, and dainty refreshments.

Then there have been the many calls for generous thinking of others less fortunate. The "Margaret" fund is put aside for the yearly dues of any one temporarily unfortunate, so

making her membership a burden. From this fund is quietly handed the amount required and no publicity attends its payment. The flower fund is a penny collection each month to furnish flowers to the sick of their number. There was the call in '98 for hospital shirts for sick and wounded soldiers and sailors of the Spanish-American war. The response was the forwarding of eighty shirts, and a quantity of comfort bags so much needed.

March 17, 1899, came a call for contributions towards a monument for Miss Rulima Walworth, daughter of one of the founders of the D. A. R. This heroine contracted disease while nursing the sick of the Spanish war for whom she laid down her young life. Money has frequently been given to elderly needy members. A donation was made toward a loving cup to our state regent, Mrs. Sarah Kinney, for long and loving service. She most generously turned the sum at once into the continental Hall fund.

An appeal came from a Memphis, Tenn., chapter, asking for a doll for a bazaar to be held to raise money for a monument to the daughter of Patrick Henry. This call was also listened to and Miss Fanny Ledyard by name, beautifully garbed in 19th century costume of blue silk gown, black satin coat trimmed with dainty lace, and white Gainsboro hat of white chiffon and velvet started on her mission to Memphis escorted by Mr. Adams Express. Other contributions are to the New London County Historical Society towards the Shaw Mansion, New London; Groton Annex; Nathan Hale school house; Franco Memorial fund; Young Men's Christian Association; jellies for Boston Hospital; Ellsworth Homestead, Windsor; Hartford Bridge celebration; Fanny Crosby's birthday present; and membership and dues of an invalid S. A. R. Two successive years general literature, periodicals and games were given for the soldiers at Fort Terry, Plumb Island, and Fort Mansfield, Watch Hill, R. I. An apportionment for the Connecticut column in Continental Hall was given, making the whole amount contributed

for the Continental Hall fund to date two hundred and fifty-one dollars. A heartfelt tribute to our martyred and lamented president, Wm. McKinley, was written by Miss Mary E. Burrows, and forwarded by the chapter to his sorrowing widow.

And with before us, the womanly kindness of our patron saint whose deeds have raised the most enduring memorial, the Fanny Ledyard chapter, D. A. R., strives by her work and deeds to do her honor, and also the country which she pledges to sustain.

## West Mystic

By HORACE CLIFT



EST MYSTIC in the town of Groton has an area of about two miles square. It extends from the river on the east to Fort Hill on the west. On the east side it extends from Beebe's cove at the foot of Devil's Foot Hill to near Porter's Rocks on the north; and on the west side from the Burrows' cemetery on Fort Hill, north along the Flanders road to the old post road.

This section was the home of the Pequot Indians when New England began to be settled by the white race. Fort Hill and Pequot Hill are noted as being their strongholds.

The rugged crags near the river on the north known as Porter's Rocks are historic as being the resting place of the allied forces under Capt. John Mason the night before the attack on the Pequot fort in May, 1637.

A few years after that decisive battle the settlement of the section began. Robert Burrows, John Packer, John Fish, and Robert Park are named as first settlers, 1652-5. The Park family located at first on the east side of the river. From that time until near the year 1800 this territory was occupied and owned chiefly by the Burrows, Packer, Fish, and Park families. Descendants of these, from time to time have been honored with the chief offices in the town of Groton and they have in turn proved an honor to the town. Some of the descendants have become men of high repute in the nation.

In 1800, and for a number of years later there were no public highways in West Mystic excepting the route from the ferry to Fort Hill, through Poquonock to Groton Bank, which was laid out very early to facilitate intercourse; and the Flanders road opened in 1748, running from Fort Hill north to the old post road and Stark's Hill. With these two exceptions the travelled routes were pent ways with gates or bars.

The ferry was established not long after the first settlements, with Robert Burrows ferryman. At one time there appears to have been



MASON MONUMENT

a ferry from the half way house (so called) at the narrows, over to where the Elm Grove cemetery now is; but the chief route was from the west side of the river across to Pistol Point on the Stonington side from whence the road continued through that town. This old route

through from New London is said to have been called the King's Highway.

In 1805, Silas Beebe a native of Waterford purchased a tract of land and located at Devil's Foot Hill. This title had been given because of the natural imprint of a foot in a rock on the hill. The piece of rock as blasted some years ago is now in the rooms of the County



STREET SCENE

Historical Society. Mr. Beebe married Hannah Rathbun, sister of Capt. Elisha Rathbun then living east near the river. Later on he made purchases until his land holdings amounted to nearly three hundred acres, reaching west to the foot of Fort Hill. He was a sea captain and was engaged in the coasting trade from 1799 to 1830 when he became connected with Jedediah Randall in the whaling business. The cove next south of Capt. Beebe's residence by common consent bears his name. His first wife had died and in 1813 he married Nancy Breed. He died May, 1863, at the age of 83.

Jedediah Randall was born in Norwich, April, 1773, and moved to Mystic in 1807. His wife was Mary Burrows, daughter of Rev. Silas Burrows, who owned the Fort Hill farm. He located at the ferry landing with Capt. Edward Packer whose wife was Prudence Crary a connection of Mr. Randall. A general provision store was kept here, and sea going vessels were built a little south from the residence. The trolley power buildings stand on these grounds. Mr. Randall purchased from Capt. Packer, besides the buildings, a number of

acres, extending up the hill where the Mystic and Noank library building is, to where his son, Isaac, some years afterwards built his residence. He continued the store business and in 1810 began building vessels. Mr. Randall also engaged extensively in the whaling business until he retired in 1834, his sons succeeding him. At the time of his retirement from business he was the wealthiest resident of Mystic. He died in January, 1851.

In 1805, Amos Clift, a sea captain who was born in Preston, purchased the farm of Nathan Burrows. He had married as second wife in 1798, Thankful Denison, daughter of Isaac and Eunice Williams Denison across the river in Stonington, who was also a cousin of his first wife Esther Williams, both being connections of Amy and Sarah Williams the successive wives of Nathan Burrows. The farm extended from the west end of the present trolley and draw bridge, north along the river to land of Capt. George Eldredge, a noted river and coast pilot, whose wife was Hannah Burrows, a niece of Nathan, and west up Pequot Hill, to near where the monument now other tract of land next west of this of George stands. A little later Capt. Clift bought an



LOOKING EAST FROM THE BRIDGE

Fish, reaching to the brook west of Pequot Hill. The Burrows house was taken down and a new one built around the chimney which was left standing. In those days a well built chimney with the large fireplaces, and baking oven was an important feature. The house still stands. The building which was taken down

is thought to have been built by the grandfather of Nathan, who was John 2d, grandson of Robert Burrows, a first settler.

At the time the chimney was built the Burrows farm extended from the trolley draw bridge north to the top of Great Hill by the Peace Meeting grove, and west from these points to top of Pequot Hill, the house being quite near the center. It is a tradition in the Burrows and Packer families, which the writer also heard his grandmother relate as fact, that after the great snowstorm in the winter of 1740-41, the valley east of the house being filled with snow and banked against the ledge and house, Desire Packer Burrows, mother of Nathan, slid from the chamber window of the residence in a huge chopping tray over the river to near the Denison mansion.

Another episode related by the same person perhaps it may be pardonable to relate. In one of his voyages, 1807-08, her husband had been gone so long without being heard from, it was thought by some that he was lost at sea, but she had believed he would return. Her father Isaac Denison was with her. A dog which Capt. Clift had left at home commenced barking in an unusual manner one morning, continually looking up the hill. It kept acting so strangely that her father said to her: "I believe Amos is coming home," and before noon they saw him riding horseback down the old bridle path. He had taken a cargo of oil and fish to Bordeaux, and then taken a freight for Caracas. Then as in more recent years Venezuela was in a revolutionary state, his vessel was seized and he and his crew were detained. He succeeded in clearing himself and crew and reaching New London. It proved to be an unjust seizure and after some delay they were indemnified.

Nathan Burrows had made two trips to Boston with his oxen during the Revolution with provisions for the patriot army. His brother John was an officer in the war. He moved to Chenango Co., New York, where he died in 1808, at the age of sixty-four. He has descendants in New York, Rhode Island and Connecticut, one of them being the present

prosecuting attorney for the town of Groton. Amos Clift died in 1818 at the age of fifty, the same year that the first bridge across the river was being built, and High street from the New London road to Burnett's Corners opened.

#### RESIDENTS IN 1800.

North of the Burrows farm, mentioned, was that of Elam Burrows, whose wife was Sarah, a daughter of Isaac Denison. Next north and extending west over Pequot Hill were the farms of Sands Fish, and wife Bridget Gallup, and Roswell Fish, and wife Isabel Phelps. North from them were Joseph Park, Jr., wife Abigail Eeckstone; Beriah Grant, wife Nancy Burrows; and William Smith, wife Abigail Willes, whose mother was Abigail Park. Joseph Park erected a grist mill on the brook near his residence. North of the Smith farm was land of Wait and Thomas Wells in the Old Mystic section, with Rose Mason (colored) living near the line.

West from the Smith farm were the farms of Paul Burrows, wife Catherine Hale; Samuel Park, wife Dolly Chappell; Nathaniel Park, wife Phebe Burrows. West from these, and extending over to the north end of the Flanders road, were Shepherd Cottrell, wife Mary Wilcox; John Braman, wife Polly Park; Dennis Burnett, wife Polly Noyes; Peter Reed (colored), wife Irene, on land of Thomas Wells; and Nathaniel Niles; besides Elisha Niles, and wife Sarah.

South from the Niles land was the farm of Holmes, Sylvester, and Phileena Walworth (not married) whose father, Sylvester Walworth, was killed in the battle at Fort Griswold 1781. East, and between their farm and Pequot Hill, was Thomas Fish and also the saw and grist mill with dwelling house then owned by him and later by Edward McGuire until abandoned. South from the Walworth farm was that of Dea. Simeon Smith, wife Eunice; east and also south of him the farm of George Fish, wife Sarah Hinckley; and on the west side of the highway, the farm with tanyard of Zebediah Gates, wife Eunice Packer; second wife Mercy Denison.

South from the Gates and Smith farms were Charles Gard, wife Bethany; Benjamin Hall, wife Huldah; Nathan Mix, wife Phebe; Baker family; Joseph Crumb, wife Eunice Tift, daughter of Solomon Tift; William Middleton, wife Lucy Walworth, daughter of Sylvers Walworth; Cheet family; Moses Latham, wife Leonora Smith; William Latham, wife Sabra Ashbey; he was wounded in the battle at Fort Griswold.

On the Fort Hill farm, living south of the present town house, was Rev. Silas Burrows, wife Mary Smith, second wife Phebe (Denison) Smith. A little west of Fort Hill lived Samuel Edgecomb, wife Rachel Copp; and also Solomon Tift, wife Eunice Burrows. Both of these men were in the battle in 1781. East from the Flanders district, along the New London road were Charles Packer, wife Abigail Latham; John Fish, wife Hannah Brush; Elisha Packer, wife Lucy Smith; Lodowick Packer, wife Delight Ashbey; Mason Packer, wife Amy Burrows; Joseph Packer, wife Hannah Packer; George Ashbey, wife Catherine Packer; Edward Packer, (land sold to Jedediah Randall); and Daniel Burrows, wife Kesi Rhodes.

East of Fort Hill and south of the New London road, Sylvester Clark, wife Abby Gates; Ebenezer Fish, wife Lydia Fish; (one of the name of Ebenezer Fish was in the battle of September, 1781, Allen's History); Chester Fitch, wife Deborah Packer; Sam-

## HISTORIC GROTON

nel Burrows, Lemuel Burrows, wife Nancy; Daniel Eldredge, wife Phoebe; he was in the battle at Fort Griswold; Joseph Ashby, wife Mary Burrows; Eldredge Packer, wife Sabrina Packer; Guy E. Burrows, wife Fanny Eldredge; John Packer, wife Hannah Gallop; he was in war of the Revolution; Joshua Packer, wife Phoebe Packer; and on the Noank line, Levi Spicer, wife Prudence Palmer.

At the south part of Goat Point was Lathan Fitch, wife Waity Burrows; Elisha Rathbun, wife Lucretia Parker; next north, Nathan Ingham, wife Experience Fish. North of that section was Isaac Park, wife Mary Billingshaas; Benjamin Packer, wife Mary Middleton; David Lewis, wife Lydia Tift; Caleb Tufts, wife Rebecca Burrows; William Murphy, wife Mary Park; William Douglass, wife Ann; Joseph Park, wife Lucy Packer; Asa Willis, wife Deborah Burrows; Daniel Packer, wife Hannah Burrows; he lived where his great grandson, Charles C. Packer, now lives. South from the residence, vessels had been built. Next north was Elam Packer, wife Catherine Fidias.

North of the ferry landing was the residence of Anthony Wolfe, wife Mary Eldredge. He was in the war of the Revolution. In the house east of the National Bank building was Jonathan Wheeler, wife Nancy Thompson. His father, Lester Wheeler, was in the war of the Revolution and also her father, Wm. Thompson. When the bridge was built in 1838 this house was owned by Ambrose H. Grant, wife Philura Brown; east of the residence was an open cove running up to where the Episcopal church building now stands. The cove was mostly filled thirty years ago with gravel floated in on scows of Capt. Thos. Williams, worked by Daniel Fisher.

This list of residences at that period is believed to be fairly accurate; there may be a few unintentionally left out. Assistance has been given by some who have knowledge of their ancestors.

With the bridge across the river and the opening of High street, West Mystic began to grow as a village. Being directly connected with the east side of the river there was also a corresponding growth of population on each side. The building of vessels of different grades and sizes which engaged in fishery and merchant trade with nearby and distant ports, owned and manned by residents, together with the whaling business caused a rapid growth for a time.

The highway from the west end of the bridge around by the machine works to the New London road was opened when the bridge was built. The road between Mystic and Noank was opened in 1833. The river road from West Mystic to Old Mystic was opened in 1853. The road on the east side of the river to Old Mystic is older. The highway from High street towards Centre Groton

known as the Alden Fish road, the West Mystic avenue, Pequot Hill avenue and then the Roswell Brown road from the Alden Fish road through to the Noank road followed in succession. Besides these there are a number of short routes and cross streets which have been opened. The post office on the west side was called Portersville for a number of years until about 1844, it was changed to Mystic River.

In 1848 the three brothers Isaac, William, and Silas B. Randall with Wm. P. Smith, Nathan Chapman and Leonard W. Morse formed and started the "Reliance Machine Company," the first of dimensions in the town of Groton. They built up a large business which flourished until the Civil war came on. The business was largely in cotton gins and machinery for the southern states. Slow payments for their goods at that time embarrassed them, and the company was obliged to succumb. Machine business has been continued here and the extensive fire proof buildings of the Standard Machinery Company now doing a large business occupy the same grounds. The tract of land east of West Mystic depot being connected with both depot and river, has rare business facilities. Before and during the war, ship building was carried on here by the firm of Maxson, Fish and Co. which included vessels for the government.

The Holmes Motor Works now located near the former shipyard are doing an extensive business in building fine yachts equipped with engines of their own manufacture. A new firm has recently started business here east of the depot, under the name of West Mystic Manufacturing Co. They are building boats and motors. The Gilbert Transportation Co. with large shipping interests, which located in Mystic within a few years, have a yard for building and repairing south of Main street, by the west end of the bridge. They are also now occupying the former shipyard on the south side of Pistol Point, east of the river, where they are building vessels. They have furnished employment for many persons. The large four-story block for stores and offices erected by them is a decided ornament to the village.

On the west side of Pearl street by the ledge there was formerly located a manufactory for wagons, carriages, etc., by Charles Johnson and Elisha Denison. Besides the local trade, business wagons were shipped through agents to California during the gold discovery period. Later the buildings burned down. The Mystic Granite and Marble Co., of McGaughey Bros., and also the Melvin blacksmith works, are now located on the grounds. A little north of this is the carriage shop of Charles H. Johnson.

business from before California times until after the war period. East from the shop was the Randall store managed by Dwight Ashbey, south from the blacksmith was the store of Simeon Fish and Son for many years, and then J. T. Batty, County Commissioner, south of the store the coal yards of Benjamin Burrows, and further along by the river where now is the Kelsy Coal Co., there had been for some years a store kept by Joseph S. Avery. West from the Burrows coal yard, by the Noank



THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

a son of the former builder. West of this E. Marston formerly worked the quarry and also had monumental works.

Near the north end of Pearl street before the Civil war, was a shipyard where a number of vessels were built by John A. Forsyth and E. Morgan. This is now occupied by residences and by the Cheney Globe Works. On the location where now stands the office building of the Groton and Stonington Trolley Co., Lyman Dudley did an extensive blacksmith

road is Chapman's blacksmith and repair shop. South from this on the corner across the street in 1850 was the store of Albert G. Stark, in which was the Mystic River post office. A little to the rear of the blacksmith shop at that time was an hotel, since burned down.

Main street, from the bridge west, is now the chief thoroughfare for stores and offices. On the north side next to the bridge is Riverside block, Central Hall building with stores

and offices, the drug store which Dr. F. M. Manning occupied a half-century ago, and in the next building at that time was the hat and cap furnishing store of Chesebro and Davis. Then the L. W. Denison & Co. block, where had been A. G. Wolf, blacksmith; the Ketchum block, Buckley's block with hall, at the east end of which stood the shop and office of the spar and block contractors, William, John and Oliver Batty, who kept the cove which then extended from their building nearly to where the Episcopal church building now stands,—well filled with spars for masts, etc., of various sizes. It was in their shop building, then vacated, that S. H. Buckley was supplying meats fifty years ago. At that time, next west was A. C. Tift's dry goods store and the present Kretser store building. Further west is the National Bank building, established over a half-century. West of this is W. E. Wheeler's block, where then was Roswell Brown's livery stable, north of which was the village bakery.

On the south side of the street, where now is the bakery, a half-century ago D. A. Hall had a grocery store. East is Brown's block, the Braman block, Avery's block, Watrous' block, Edgecomb's block, and the store building where D. N. Prentice then had a grocery store with L. A. Morgan, now an owner in Central Hall block and other interests, as clerk. Next comes the Gilbert block with stores, offices, and a public hall, their building extending to the river. Besides these there is also the Pearl street grocery, farther north in the village.

In 1850 the only stores on Main St. west of the bridge were: On the north side, Elam Eldredge and Eldredge Wolfe's market, F. M. Manning's drug store, O. D. Noyes' furnishing store and A. C. Tift's dry goods store; on the south side were Thomas Williams' paint shop, Martin Lawson, tin shop, and D. N. Prentice, groceries. In the present G. A. R. building on Pearl St. was the undertaking and repair shop of D. D. Edgecomb and Gilbert Morgan. A short distance north were Thomas and Jesse Lamphere, dealers in fish and oysters. At the same period the Messrs. Gallup brothers, James, John and Benjamin, car-

penters, had a shop and lumber yard on the east side of Gravel St. Previous to 1850, Amos Clift, then in California, had been a builder with a shop on the hill where his father had built his residence in 1805. At this time and later, Henry Latham, an old resident was also in the carpenter business, his shop being south of the New London road. Also there were Gurdon S. Allen and Reuben and Roswell Chapman. A little later were C. E. Tufts, J. R. Stark and J. S. Heath, with Calvin Cromwell, all of whom have passed away. Connected with these builders, who still remain, were F. B. Mayo, Austin Gallup and E. R. Williams, Civil war veterans. On the east side some younger and still active, there remain William Murphy and Hiram Clift. Soon after 1850 and for many years Asa A. Avery and son Allen conducted an undertaker's and furniture business on Main St. It should be remembered that in those days there were master mechanics in mason work, Lanman, Denison and Nelson Lamb, Nathan Lamb and Edwin and William Slack.

The village is so connected that business on either side affects the other. On the east side a half-century ago and earlier the shipyards of George, Clark and Thomas Greenman; of Charles Mallory with Mason C. Hill, foreman; and of Dexter Irons and George Grinnell, were each driving business. At the time when ship building was prosperous there were two sail lofts; one on the east side of the river conducted by Isaac D. Clift, David Weems and Ebenezer Beebe; and on the west side by Grover G. King and Griswold Beebe. D. O. Richmond and Charles Eldredge were boat builders. Edwin R. Gallup, tailor, was post master. The lumber yards of Joseph Cottrell, and coal yards of Isaac D. Holmes were the chief sources of supply for those necessities. The stores were those of L. W. Denison & Co., where Thomas C. Forsyth, since master of merchant vessels, was clerk. This store had been that of Hoxsie and Palmer; Asa Fish, who was probate judge for Stonington, and D. D. Mallory & Co. Besides these there was a confectionery store kept by the bridge tender at the east end of the bridge, also one under the old hotel. The bridge was freed from toll

dates to 1855. T. E. Packer and Charles Denison were insurance agents.

On the east side in Greenmanville section, there is a large woolen factory, the Mystic Manufacturing Co., which has been doing business many years; and also the extensive Rossie Velvet Mill works. A little to the north of these are monumental works, and Brown's twine and rope factory. Not far north of the bridge, by the river side, is the manufactory of James W. Lathrop Co., doing a large business in motor engines for all species of power. On Pistol Point is the spool factory. East from the depot is Packer's tar soap factory and storehouse; and a little beyond, across the cove, is the large, new building of the Industrial Co.'s Ninigret Mills. South from them is the Wilcox Fertilizer Works, now well established. There are two grain stores on the east side of the river. The G. E. Tripp's block, the Gates and Newbury block, and the Hotel Hoxie building contain stores and offices. The hotel was built by Messrs. Tufts and Stark about 1860 for Mr. B. F. Hoxie. It stands on the site of a former hotel, which was owned by Capt. Nathaniel Clift. The Shore Line hotel is south of this, and across the street, west from the Shore Line, is the auto repair shop. The Cottrell Lumber Co. occupies the old lumber yards. There was formerly a sash and blind factory near the yard. There was also a large machine shop built on Pistol Point, which was unsuccessful and was changed to a woolen mill, but finally was burned down.

On the east side there are now three church buildings. The Methodist Episcopal church was organized in 1835. The first pastor was Rev. William S. Simmons. The present pastor is Rev. C. T. Hatch. The Congregational church was organized in 1852. The first pastor was Rev. Walter R. Long. The present pastor is Rev. F. A. Earnshaw. St. Patrick's Roman Catholic church was organized with Rev. P. P. Lalor first pastor in 1870. The present pastor is Rev. C. A. Leddy. This church has recently dedicated a new temple of worship. A Seventh Day Baptist church was organized at Greenmanville, on the east side, in 1850 with Rev. Sherman S. Griswold, pastor for a

number of years. He was a popular clergyman in the village, although quite outspoken on political subjects, but that was an era of decided opinions. The church ceased as a public organization three years since. The last pastor was Rev. O. D. Sherman.

The first organized church within the limits of West Mystic, was the Second Baptist church of Groton. It was under the leadership of Rev. Silas Burrows. The meetings were held mostly at his dwelling house on Fort Hill from 1765 until after the war, when a house of worship was built on the crown of the hill north from his residence, and known as the Fort Hill church. There occurred a number of special revival seasons under his pastorate and that of his son, Rev. Roswell Burrows, who succeeded him. The father died in 1818 at the age of seventy-seven, and the son in 1837, aged sixty-nine years. Both of these pioneers of the church rest in the yard on the crest of the hill by the scene of their labors.

Rev. Ira R. Steward followed as pastor until in 1844, a new house of worship was built at Mystic. Some of the members had become connected with new churches started at Groton Bank and Noank. Another church was already established, at West Mystic, known as the Mariners' Free church, which was for a time alternately occupied by ministers of different denominations and later became the Third Baptist church. The two houses of worship were not many rods apart and in 1861 the churches became united, and the buildings were connected by moving the Third church building a little to the rear, and moving that of the Second church up to the front of it. They became the Union Baptist Church, and the house was dedicated Oct. 9, 1862.

After the removal from Fort Hill to the new house of worship in Mystic, Rev. Henry R. Knapp was pastor of the Second church five years; Rev. Washington Munger three years; Rev. Harvey Silliman two years; Rev. J. M. Phillips four years; with supplies following his pastorate until the union. Rev. Erastus Denison was the first pastor of the Third church for two years, and was followed by Rev. John H. Baker in 1837 for two years.

Rev. Erastus Denison was again pastor from April, 1839, until April, 1848; Rev. Simon B. Bailey, about two years; Rev. Franklin A. Slater, three years; Rev. J. L. Holman one year, and Rev. William Cathcart about three years. Rev. Asa C. Bronson succeeded in May, 1858, until the two churches united, and he was pastor of the Union church until his resignation, taking effect April 1, 1869. Rev. George L. Hunt was pastor from Jan. 2, 1870, until Jan. 2, 1881; Rev. Charles H. Rowe from Oct. 1881 to 1884; Rev. George H. Miner from July, 1884, to May, 1893; Rev. Archibald Wheaton from September, 1893, to September, 1900; Rev. Byron Ulric Hatfield from

died. In July, 1896, Elias F. Wilcox, John G. Packer and Louis P. Allyn were elected deacons.

St. Mark's Episcopal church was organized as a parish in February, 1865, Rev. Lorenzo Sears, rector; Daniel W. Denison, senior warden; Roswell Brown, junior warden.

Rev. Mr. Sears was rector until April, 1866, and was succeeded by Rev. W. Ingram Magill, who was rector from July, 1866, until October, 1869. He was followed by Rev. O. F. Starkey from December, 1869, until December, 1872, and Rev. J. D. S. Pardoe from January, 1873, to May, 1881. During his rectorship the church being free from debt was con-



EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND STREET SCENE

December, 1900, to March, 1904; Rev. Welcome E. Bates, the present pastor, since July, 1904.

The deacons of the Second church previous to the union were Elisha Rathbun, Albert Edgecomb, William H. Potter, Dudley Chesebro. Those of the Third church were H. N. Fish, Nathan G. Fish, George N. Wright, Lauman Lamb. The Union Baptist church continued N. G. Fish, Albert Edgecomb, W. H. Potter and G. N. Wright. In 1868 there were chosen as deacons Horace Clift, William H. Smith, John Gallup and Leander Wilcox. In 1882 the first named of these resigned the appointment. In April, 1886, Robert P. Wilbur, J. Alden Rathbun and John O. Fish were elected. Deacons Wm. H. Potter, John Gallup, Leander Wilcox and J. O. Fish have since

seceded by Bishop Williams, April 25, 1873, on St. Mark's day. Rev. W. F. Bielby was rector three years; Rev. J. A. Ticknor one year; Rev. Samuel Hall one year; Rev. Joseph Hooper, six years; Rev. H. L. Mitchell, two years; Rev. Eugene Griggs, three years; Rev. H. L. Mitchell, three years; Rev. A. C. Jones, the present rector, seven years.

The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Miss Grace W. Edick, first reader, and Charles H. Latham, second reader, have a hall in Gilbert's block. Regular services are held Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. The reading room is open daily.

Before the steam cars were running, freight was brought in vessels, and about 1850 there were regular lines of sloops running to New York, and to New London and Norwich.

It can be seen that Mystic has become quite a business centre, and there appears no reason why it should not continue. It is centrally located between New York and Boston. It has a good river channel connection with the sound and ocean. The Shore Line railroad depots are convenient for business, travel and shipments. The finishing touch for convenience of travel has come with the Groton and Stonington Trolley Company, with express cars for freight. Although it may not be classed an ideal section for high grade farming, there being some rocks and ledges, yet extra good crops of grain, fruit and berries have been raised. It has, in quite recent years, been somewhat noted for blooded cattle. There are streaks of good granite in a number of ledges in the village limits, which have been used for building purposes.

It is a satisfaction to know that by the liberality of a gentleman of large wealth, who has located in the town, the old highway from Mystic over Fort Hill and through Poquonock is to be graded and macadamized. This is not the only instance of his generosity. Now in the prime of life, it is hoped that he may enjoy a serene old age with abundant resources and a continuous will to help improve and adorn the town.

Changes are going on. They may appear hardly perceptible at first, but after the lapse of time they show out distinctly. In 1800, and for a quarter of a century later, the Flanders school district was one of the largest in numbers of any in the town. At that time the Fort Hill church outnumbered others. It was the central place of worship for a large section of the town.

During the pastorate of Rev. Roswell Burrows, from 1809 to 1837, more than 700 had joined that church. The place of baptism for that section was not far north on the Flanders road. It was on the east side of the highway, northeast of the present residence of Mr. Ira Mosher, and just north of where then stood the home of Nathan and Phebe Mix. A deep cut drain under the highway drains off the pond, but the basin in the meadow shows where it was. In those days a baptismal scene

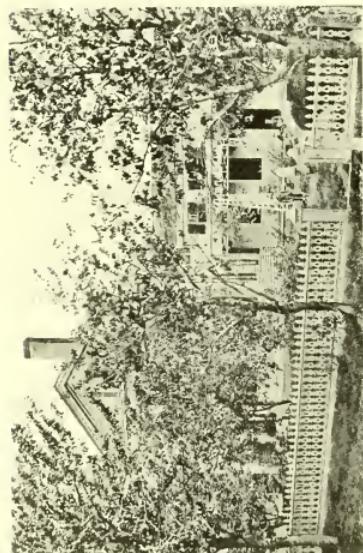
was one of the chief events, and this location being near the centre of the present town limits, there would be a large assemblage from all directions. Now the scenes have changed, the population and the churches are elsewhere. To those who cherish sentiment, who are descendants of those worshippers, the old route from the meeting house to the baptistry, used for over half a century, seems like consecrated ground.

The Mystic River National Bank commenced business in November, 1851, with Charles Mallory president. The Groton Savings Bank commenced business in 1854 with Nathan G. Fish, president; and the National Bank of Mystic Bridge (east side of the river) was organized in 1864, with Charles Mallory, president.

In the first half of the last century the local physicians were John O. Miner of Centre Groton, Mason Manning of Old Mystic, and Benjamin F. Stoddard. A half century ago they were E. Frank Coates, Alfred A. Coates, John Gray and A. W. Brown, and of those who studied and practised with them, Oscar M. Barber and Frank A. Coates.

The generations which preceded, did not have present day school advantages; very few had wealth, yet as a community of intelligence and worthiness, their descendants may justly honor their memories. The public schools in the village are graded. On the east side (Stonington district) a fine new school house is being erected. In West Mystic, Prof. A. L. Pitcher is principal with an able corps of assistant teachers. For several years a teacher of drawing has been employed, Miss Francis E. Nye, who has given general satisfaction. The "Mystic Academy" building was first occupied as an academy by John L. Denison, principal, and afterwards purchased by the fifth school district. There are now nine teachers in West Mystic schools, one of them being in the Flanders district. In 1850 there were four teachers in all.

One of the events at that period was a school exhibition during the winter of '40-'50. It was held one evening in the school house, which stood a few rods north of the Baptist church building, on the second floor, which

*HISTORIC GROTON*

RESIDENCE OF MR. AMOS R. CHAPMAN



RESIDENCE OF MR. ABERT STANTON, "BROADVIEW"

RESIDENCE OF MRS. JOHN S. RATHBONE  
The Corbin Cupboard

RESIDENCE OF MRS. ANNIE L. WEBB

was the room of the older scholars, with William H. Potter teacher. Dudley A. Avery was teacher on the lower floor. It was the time when the California fever was raging, with visions of staking out claims and panning out the gold dust. It was a varied programme and the crowded building shook with the applause given those who took part. The teacher was on the stage and being a little apprehensive of danger requested the audience to be quiet and not stamp the feet. One of the pieces rendered was a popular song of the day by Frank L. Dudley. The visitors, some of whom were soon to sail for the land of gold, could not suppress their enthusiasm and joined in the chorus:

"Oh, California! Oh, that's the place for me!  
I'm bound for California with my washbowl on my knee."

He was closing up the song with "washbowl" in hand and the chorus was making the welkin ring, when the floor began to settle, letting them all down amid much confusion and outeries. The stage also dropped in front, thus sliding most of the audience to the lower floor. No one was seriously hurt. The exhibition was afterwards repeated in a conference house with a fee to help pay the cost of repairs.

The Oral School for the Deaf, located on the hill near the north line of West Mystic, is a useful and successful institution. It receives regular appropriations from the state. The pupils have recently numbered between forty and fifty.

The Universal Peace Society hold their annual meetings in their grove on "Great Hill," which is south from the Oral school grounds. These meetings are largely attended and no doubt are productive of good. There may be differences with some of the views expressed; but no person can doubt the sincerity of the advocates, nor the merits of the cause.

The Mystic and Noank Library was founded in 1892. The library corporation was formed in 1893 and consists of five trustees. This large and elegant structure was the gift of Capt. Elihu Spicer. Some years ago he also purchased a farm home for the dependent

ones of the town. He has passed from us, but his liberality should not be forgotten.

During the war of 1812-14, the people along the coast were harassed by the British fleet. Commodore Hardy's men, besides their experience at Stonington, also found their equals in this vicinity. During the year 1813, the sloop Fox, Capt. Jesse Crary, was captured. Within a few weeks more than twenty American sails were captured. Capt. Crary had escaped, and immediately planned for the re-capture of his vessel. The sloop Hero was fitted out from Mystic with a privateer's commission, Ambrose H. Burrows, captain. They were provided with a four-pounder, firearms and ammunition. Before reaching Block Island they saw the Fox standing in with double reef. She came within two miles of the Hero when she became suspicious, tacked ship and ran off. Both sloops were built by Eldredge Packer at West Mystic and were fast vessels. The Fox was furnished with a six pounder, but the Hero keeping on her lee, she could not bring it to bear. The guns of the Hero soon forced the Fox to change her course, and as she wore around, the Hero ran her bowsprit through the Fox's mainsail; they then grappled and fought hand to hand. The battle ended just at evening with a victory for the Hero. It took place the last day of April, about ten miles southeast of Block Island. The next morning while the British were in hot pursuit the Hero and Fox passed triumphantly up the river. The victors were mostly young men, and a number of them became masters of merchant vessels.

In June the enemy had captured and destroyed a sloop near the mouth of the river, and attempted to capture Capt. Jeremiah Hale's sloop, which had grounded on Ram Point, but they were driven off. The location known as Fort Rachel, a natural fortification of rock on its east and south sides, a short distance south from the ferry, was manned as a defence by the citizens. A company had been formed, and Jonathan Wheeler the village blacksmith, was chosen captain. It was decided to make the attempt to capture part of the British fleet.

A barge was built and fitted up as a decoy, loaded with barrels and boxes. Capt. Simeon Haley, Paul Burrows, John Washington, Henry Park and Ezekiel Tufts managed her so as to attract attention when a black barge from the fleet with an officer and a dozen men gave chase. After some manoeuvering the decoy men were driven ashore at Long Point, west of Noank, and fiercely followed up the bank by the British, who unexpectedly met the forces under Capt. Wheeler, which were

ed, and the atmosphere was one of war with the tramp of armed men ready for the fray. Isaac Park, one of the residents, was taken prisoner while off in his fishing boat, and held on board the frigate several days. Learning that he was a pilot, they tried to force him to steer their barge up the river one dark night. He apparently yielded and chose an hour when it was quite low tide. The barge was filled with men supplied with weapons. One of them kept his pistol pointing at Park, so



VIEW OF SHIPYARD FROM THE BRIDGE

lying in ambush. At the first fire of the militia, which killed one and wounded others, the pursuers threw up their hands and surrendered. They were taken in their barge around to the ferry landing and to the Randall house, where the wounded were cared for. The dead Britisher was buried near the northwest corner of the old Packer cemetery on the hill. The wounded recovered and later the prisoners were exchanged.

It was much like a camp ground around the old landing. A raid or an attack was expect-

that he could understand he was to be shot if he attempted any trickery. They dipped the oars cautiously, but moved quite swiftly. When within range of the fort, Park veered his course and ran the craft on Clam Island, just south of the railroad bridge. As the vessel grounded and the attention of the men was taken from him, he jumped from the stern and swam into the channel. In the darkness he escaped. They made no further direct attempt to attack "that nest of wasps up the river."

Judge R. A. Wheeler's report of the battle of Stonington in the County History, gives the names of those from Mystic Bridge as follows:

Jeremiah Holmes, Nathaniel Clift, Simeon Haley, Jeremiah Haley, Frederick Denison, Ebenezer Denison, Isaac Denison, Jr., and Frederick Haley. Capt. Holmes had command of the battery on the 10th of August. Frederic Denison was killed.

West Mystic has furnished her full quota of men for all the wars. During the Civil war there were more than three hundred enlistments from the town.

The list of those killed, and who died in the service:

Capt. Jedediah Randall, Orrin D. Barker, Charles B. Andrews, Horatio N. Fish, Jr., William H. Durfee, Benjamin Crossly, Lorenzo Burrows, Thomas Fisher, John Barnes, William Brantley, John Burk, William Johnson, John L. Seignous, Adam C. Bentley, William C. Fenows, Elias W. Watrous, Julius A. Perkins, Cyrus J. Pease, John F. Putnam, Edmund F. Smith, Abner N. Spencer, Samuel Vanankin, Chauncy F. Wileox, John Attnard, Fruscious Bailey, Thomas Blance, William H. Watrous, Thomas H. Shirley, James Tinker, William N. Mulkey, George A. Fish, Samuel Rathbun, William P. Latham.

Many have died from wounds and disease resulting from the war. Among them was Lieut. Colonel Hiram Appelman, who was Secretary of State at the time of his death.

The town of Groton was separated from New London and became a township including Ledyard in 1705. In 1839, Groton and Ledyard became separate towns and probate districts.

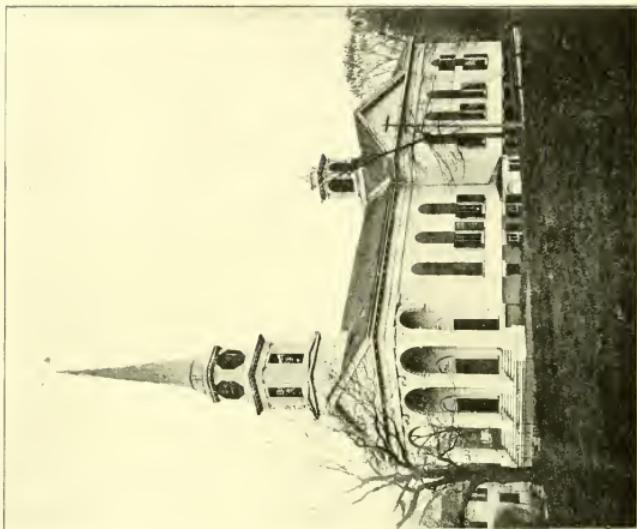
Stephen Haley was judge one year, James Gallup two years, Nathan Daboll three years, Joseph Durfey two years, Zebediah Gates four years, Albert G. Stark two years, Nathan G. Fish one year, Sanford Stark one year, Amos Clift eighteen years, Hiram Appelman one year, William H. Potter six years, Lemuel Clift twenty-two years, Arthur P. Anderson four years, now in office. There have been clerks of the court, Nathan Daboll, Nathan G. Fish, David A. Daboll, John Hudson, Albert G. Stark, Nathan S. Fish, Amos Clift, Lemuel Clift, George F. Costello. Mystic has a supply of legal talent, Lemuel Clift in the Civil war and ex-judge, Frank H. Hinckley, prosecuting attorney for town of Stonington; Albert Denison, and Benjamin Hewitt, Jr., all have offices in West Mystic.

There are two local newspapers, the Mystic Times and the Mystic Journal. The Times is the successor of the Mystic Press and the Mystic Pioneer. Mr. A. L. Pitcher, is the publisher. The Journal publisher is Mr. Harry Anderson.

Many of the old residents were sea-captains and many adventures might be related connected with them. Capt. J. Warren Holmes, now retired, but quite active, was 63 years on the water, and sailed 84 times around Cape Horn. About 1856 the ships Twilight, Capt. Gurdon Gates, and the Andrew Jackson, Capt. John E. Williams, (both men were near neighbors here), sailed from New York at the same time and reached San Francisco in about 100 days, with only two or three hours difference in time, the Jackson being first. Both vessels were built in Mystic. Later the Andrew Jackson made the trip in 90 days.

One of the stirring events connected with life on the ocean occurred with Capt. Ambrose H. Burrows and his son, Brutus, in the year 1822. The brig "Frederick," with a valuable cargo, while off the coast of Peru, was approached at midnight by a strange vessel, which signalled its presence by firing guns. A rough command ordered them to send the brig's boat aboard immediately or else be sunk. Capt. Burrows complied with the demand as soon as possible, taking his papers along, supposing the stranger to be a regular cruiser. Before his boat with his aids reached the strange vessel, a boat was sent full of men to the "Frederick" who leaped aboard with drawn cutlasses headed by an officer, who ordered every man belonging to the vessel, excepting the first officer, to get into the boat instantly. They were conducted to the pirate brig, as she proved to be, caused to sit down, and handcuffed.

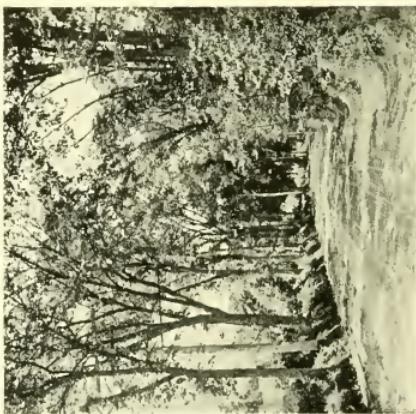
In the morning they were mustered on deck, where a strange scene presented itself. In groups on the deck were nearly a hundred men of different nations, armed to the teeth. The pirate captain, a stout, fierce looking man, informed Capt. Burrows he intended to take his prize, the "Frederick," and cargo to Chiloe, and as there was no one on his own vessel who could navigate her excepting his first lieutenant, he wished for Capt. Burrows to take her there and assured him of good treatment if he would do so. To this Capt. Burrows assented on condition that his son be allowed to go with him. This permission was



BAPTIST CHURCH



TROLLEY POWER HOUSE



ROAD NEAR WEST MYSTIC

granted, with the warning that the men who were to accompany him would shoot both if he did not take the vessel to the right place. With the officer and nine men to accompany him, the two vessels soon parted company.

After a few days of quiet sailing, Capt. Burrows matured his plans for recapture. He secured the small arms belonging to his vessel, loaded and concealed them in his stateroom. It was customary each morning for the commanding officer and his assistant to go into the cabin and examine the charts with the

to the man at the wheel, who gave up to them. The crew were then ordered below. The captain now approached the scuttle and commanded them to come up singly, and leave every weapon below, threatening to blow out the brains of the first one who disobeyed. They obeyed, and one by one were bound and lashed to the gunnels.

In the morning it was proposed to them either to take the launch and try their fortune in her, or be carried into Callao and be delivered up as pirates; they all preferred taking

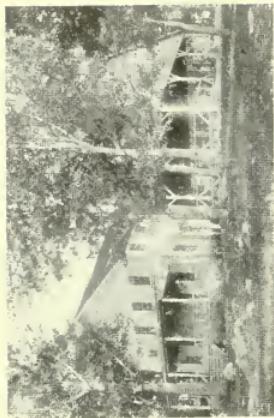


RESIDENCE OF MR. JESSE D. Crary

captain. One morning while examining the charts he addressed them: "Here sirs," pointing on the chart, "you suppose you are, but sirs you are deceived; you are not far from land, and now stir hand or foot, make but the slightest noise, and you're dead men." They looked up and saw the pistols pointing at them in the hands of Capt. Burrows and his son. He informed them he was determined to have his vessel or die; and they must submit or be shot. Amazed, and realizing that resistance meant death for them, the two men submitted to be bound. After securing them, one on each side of the cabin, Capt. Burrows and his son hurried on deck and presented their pistols

the launch, and accordingly Capt. Burrows was rid of their company.

The astonishment of the two prisoners still bound in the cabin was great when they learned the situation. These two men had shown some kindness to Capt. Burrows, while he was their prisoner, and needing assistance on his vessel, he took the risk of unbinding them, after pledging themselves to stand by and aid him. They were kept alternately at the helm until the brig arrived safely at Callao in the month of February. Capt. Burrows, believing they were sincere and really meant to lead a better life, supplied them with money and allowed them to go.

*HISTORIC GROTON*

PEACE TEMPLE



RESIDENCE OF MR. L. A. COLBURN



RESIDENCE OF MR. H. N. WHEELER



RESIDENCE OF MR. ALFRED O. COOLBY

The soldiers' monument on East Main St. was presented to the village by Mrs. Charles H. Mallory. At its dedication a number of Grand Army post veterans paraded, amid much enthusiasm displayed by the citizens. Governor Thomas M. Waller and staff officers were present. The address was by U. S. Senator Joseph R. Hawley, Rev. Frederick Denison reading a poem. Capt. John K.

which the commissioners appointed by the governor of the state had decided upon, placed on a boulder monument, was unveiled June 26, 1889. Gov. Buckley and staff, with many visitors from abroad, were present.

The battle on Pequot Hill was the first one of importance in New England. The sacrifice of lives is sad to contemplate, but it resulted in giving some security to the early set-



BUSINESS BLOCK OF THE GILBERT TRANSPORTATION COMPANY

Bucklyn, a war veteran and principal of Mystic Valley Institute, presided at the unveiling.

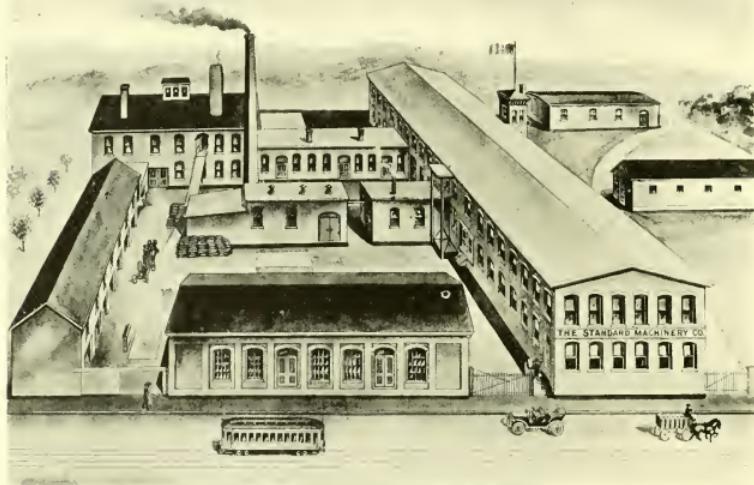
After some discussion for a Pequot Hill monument, a committee was appointed by the New London County Historical Society in 1866, to bring the matter of an appropriation before the legislature at its session of 1887. The members of the assembly from these and other towns favoring it, an appropriation was voted. Sufficient funds had been contributed to furnish the pedestal. The legislature of 1889 voted an appropriation for unveiling expenses, and the bronze statue of a Puritan warrior,

lers. It appears to be easy and natural to criticize past events, yet it may not be so easy to fully comprehend the situation at the time they occurred. Connecticut was like a wilderness roamed by wild beasts and a savage race. Few in numbers and scattered, the colony realized the time had come to take action for their own safety. Massachusetts gave some assistance and John Mason, a trained soldier, who had preferred life with the colony to being a major general, was chosen captain of the expedition. Bluff and courageous, he was a typical representative of

that era, being regarded as a hero throughout New England.

It was a perilous undertaking. The commander, and no doubt every man of them, had the intelligence to comprehend what would be their doom, with the probable fate of the colony if they failed. The Pequots were fleet of foot and were dreaded for their cruelty. Mason knew that his Indian allies, who cherished a fear of them, might not be relied on. It was a critical moment when the Pequots,

serts itself. At the time of the battle on Pequot Hill and for many years afterwards, civilization appeared as in a morbid condition. It was not only in European countries, but also in New England, the air was surcharged with cries against "heresy" and "witchcraft," and punishment with a horrible death was often meted out. It seems a strange commentary that progress of civil and religious liberty should have to come through war; but history reveals the fact of the tendency of hu-



PLANT OF THE STANDARD MACHINERY COMPANY

after the first shock of surprise was over, came swarming out to repel the invaders. The burning embers in a wigwam suggested the idea, which was seized upon to aid the conquest. The strife which followed was of short duration and terrible; but the colony was saved.

A noted and experienced veteran declared with graphic emphasis, "War is hell!" When contending armies meet for a decisive conflict it means there will be destruction and death, in the hour of such extremity, the right of self-preservation, nature's first law, usually as-

man nature when clothed with power to use it arbitrarily and unjustly, which has been a chief cause of war. Religious devotees have proved no exception to the rule. It was the reaction of this tendency which caused the article for religious freedom to be imbedded in the Constitution of the United States, for which there is cause to be grateful.

Born and reared in New England, "Around her hills and valleys cling the gentle recollections of our early life." Cherishing a feeling akin to reverence, it is not desired to speak lightly about the "awful virtues of our Pilgrim

sires;" for whatever their faults, their virtues were not excelled by those of any creed or any people of that epoch. Investigation and the diffusion of knowledge have helped to curb the spirit of fanaticism and intolerance which so widely prevailed. The time should not be far distant when education with religion—with the light of history as a guide, can afford some assurance of a continual peace on the earth.

It is nearly two thousand years since the words were spoken to His followers: "This

is my commandment that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." In the hour of agony proving himself the exemplar of the sermon on the Mount, forsaken even by His disciples, He prayed for His persecutors: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" When all the sects of Christendom exhibit that spirit towards each other, and a majority of the human race attain to that high plane of charity and love, it may reasonably be expected that wars will cease.

## Old Mystic

By SIMEON GALLUP

**N**EAR the northeasterly corner of the town of Groton the Lantern Hill brook flowing from the north joins a stream from the west, and thence both continuing southerly are soon lost in the tide waters of the broad estuary known as the Mystic river. In the narrow valley having the elevated ridge of



SCHOOLHOUSE

Quakataug Hill in Stonington on the east, and the rocky highlands of Groton on the west, just at the junction of the two streams nestles the village of Old Mystic. Its beautiful situation and charming natural features have been renowned ever since the advent of the white man. Tradition tells us that people who first came into this section from the valley of the Mystic river in the vicinity of Boston brought the name with them and gave it to this delightful river and valley.

The early settlers of Connecticut and Rhode Island were exposed to the inveterate hostility of the Pequot Indians and endured untold suf-

ferings from their relentless warfare. In 1637 the Massachusetts, Plymouth, and Connecticut colonies joined their forces in an expedition to exterminate them, and Capt. John Mason with eighty men and three hundred friendly Indians was sent into the Pequot country for that purpose.

The precise situation of the Pequot headquarters was not known, but was believed to be in southeastern Connecticut. The forces assembled at Hartford and sailing down the Connecticut river, thence around into Narragansett bay, they anchored on the west side in the harbor at Wickford, and disembarking set out on their march westward in pursuit of the enemy. Crossing Rhode Island they arrived in the evening of the 25th of May at the Mystic river, which they forded at its head where Old Mystic is now situated. Here they learned that they were already in the vicinity of the savages whom they sought, and as the day was far spent they marched only a short distance further in a southerly direction, and took shelter for the night in a glen between high and precipitous rocks in the range of hills on the west, at a place known as Porter's Rocks. The tired and hungry troops remained through the night for rest and refreshment, intending the next morning at break of day to attack the Pequot stronghold, which was only about one and a half miles further south, on the highland known as Pequot Hill west of the Mystic river. The sentinels heard the carousing of the Pequots in their fort as they engaged in the war dance through the night, expecting on the next day to go out and find and destroy the English, whose vessels they had seen pass, and they supposed the English dared not attack them in the fort.

At two o'clock on the morning of May 26th, the English went forth and quickly found the strongly fortified Pequot village. The story

of the desperate fight that followed, and the almost complete destruction of the Pequots there assembled, has been oft told in histories of state and nation, and need not be here repeated. An important chapter in the early history of Groton was enacted, and a great movement accomplished toward securing safety for the white race. The place of this desperate struggle is of historic interest and importance, as well as that of the camp at Porter's Rocks, and each is well worthy of some fitting monument by the State.

The hamlet formed by the first settlers was from its situation on the river familiarly called by its inhabitants and their neighbors, "Head of the River," a name given to many other villages similarly situated. The post office was early called "Mystic" and was established on the east side of the river.

The name remained the same until the year 1890, when by order of the post office department it was changed to "Old Mystic."

A greater number of people, finding places more advantageous for business or for dwellings, also located on the east side of the river, thus establishing a correspondingly greater part of the business of the village in the town of Stonington. An extended description of many important industries, that have contributed largely to the prosperity of the whole village, is by this restriction to town boundaries placed without the limits of this article. Such is the case with the early ship-building industry at the Leeds shipyard, the making of cotton goods which flourished at John Hyde's factories at an early date, and later the manufacture of woolen goods by Amos B. Taylor, the banking business of the Mystic National bank, besides other lesser industries and mercantile interests.

The opening of the New London and Providence turnpike about the year 1820 brought to the growing village communication with the outside world, as direct and immediate as any large cities dependent upon land travel enjoyed at that time. It was a part of an important avenue of travel from New York to Boston, maintaining daily trains of three or more four-horse stage coaches. The passing of

these stages was an object of great interest to those living near the turnpike. The necessary stopping of these trains of coaches at the taverns or hostelleries along the route for relay of horses, and refreshment of travelers, brought a breeze from the outside world, and was an occasion of much bustle and commotion. All the idlers of the village and many others, too, drew near to see the passengers, hear the news, and take their fill of the excitement of the day. The stage drivers, in the opinion of that company, were men of vast importance, and the one who could pick a fly from the ear of his leaders with his long whip or could round up his frisky team at the tavern with an extra flourish, was the greatest man of them all. There was such a turnpike tavern in Old Mystic fronting the triangular village green kept by Russel Williams. The house was built in 1754 and is still used as a dwelling. The separate part of the house, de-



OLD TURNPIKE TAVERN

signed as a barroom, and the extra cupboards and closets in hidden and out of the way places, signify to this day the kind of refreshment mostly provided for travelers.

A prosperous tannery business was established not far from the turnpike tavern about the year 1841, and conducted for many years by John S. Schoonover who acquired a handsome competence in its pursuit. He employed several men and was noted for his careful attention to the details of business and for the superior quality of the leather he manufac-

tured. By his liberality the village received a valuable tower clock which was placed in the steeple of the Baptist church.

No village could long exist without its blacksmith. A shop for the pursuit of that calling stood just at the entrance of the tan-yard above mentioned, and many will recall the corpulent form and cheery countenance of the occupant, Stephen H. Wheeler, as he diligently engaged in work at his anvil. There was work, and there was also talk. It seemed to be the privilege if not the duty of the blacksmith to acquire all the news the very earliest moment it came to town, and there was always a story to tell, while the roaring bellows and the ringing anvil furnished a vigorous accompaniment. The farmer who came with horses or oxen to be shod, or tools to be repaired, could have his defective line of news improved and his stores of information greatly increased, while his real errand compelled him to wait. The sound of the blacksmith's anvil has passed with those who made it, and even the shop has been obliterated, and its place can be pointed out only by those who remember.

But the shoemaker's shop of old was the most homey place of all the trades, where one could sit at ease while being measured for a boot or shoe, or watch the piece of work grow under the shoemaker's skillful hands. Such a place was the shop of William Crumb, who for more than sixty years used as his place of work the former bar-room of the old turnpike tavern. His business included repairing and making boots and shoes in the best style of the art known in those days, both for custom work and for the wholesale trade.

About the year 1850 the manufacture of ropes was an important industry in New England, though now but little pursued. Two rope walks were then in operation in Old Mystic; one conducted by Joseph A. Lamb was situated in the grove across the river from the main street of the village; the other managed by Barton Saunders was at the north end of the village on the Norwich road. Those were the days of the inveterate village joker. Three of that class were one day looking for a victim as Mr. Saunders came up the street,

with a heavy load of factory spools or rollers of coarse thread used in making ropes, and stopped for a few minutes at the hay scales. One of the watching trio quietly cut the long rope used in binding the load, nearly severing it, and when the load moved on, all followed at a short distance in the rear to see what would happen. As the team went up Brimstone Hill at Crumb's corner, when near the top and at the steepest place, the binding rope parted, and the whole load was quickly discharged, rolling down, to the foot of the hill. Mr. Saunders looked around with dismay, and after examination to find the cause, he soon discovered what had been done to the rope. The three men almost immediately appeared, and when they profusely offered their services to help replace the load, he was at once assured who were the authors of the disaster.

A water privilege with a corn and grain mill was established in 1853 on the stream flowing from the west near its junction with the river, at which milling is done the greater part of the year in addition to a large trade in grain and feed. The mill pond also furnishes the privilege from which a great part of the ice used in both Mystics is taken, and is of itself an important industry. About one mile westerly up this stream stands the old Babcock grain mill, used as such a generation ago, that business having been superceded in later years by a line factory.

The hamlet known as Burnet's Corners is located at this point on the turnpike, and is so called from the residence of the Burnet family at one of the angles of the highway crossing. The house was built about the year 1840 by Capt. Richard Burnet and kept by him as the "Pequot Hotel" during the last days of passenger travel on the turnpike. Its spacious hall was at one time a noted resort for pleasure parties, for dancing schools, balls and other gatherings. The house is now the private residence of members of the same family. The opposite angle of the highway is the site of the district school house.

Continuing westward up this same inconsiderable but very industrious stream, there was a small mill known as the "Stone Factory"

built for the manufacture of cloth, but afterward used for grinding corn and grain and other purposes. Above this was a mill sometimes called "Blue Ruin" used as a carding mill in which woolen rolls were carded for spinning and weaving by hand in the homes throughout a wide section of territory. Half a mile north from Burnet's Corners was the machine shop and business of Watrous and Bacon, which employed several men and constructed machines of value and importance. The Welles homestead is situated on the turnpike about half a mile west of the village near which is a steam mill used for sawing various kinds of lumber. The Welles family have from the earliest times been owners of large tracts of land in Groton, one of which includes the historic Porter's Rocks and their picturesque surroundings.

### Oldest Baptist Church in the State

The history of this church reaches back to a date one year earlier than the organization of the town of Groton. In 1704, a few scattered Baptists residing east of the Thames river in New London petitioned the general court for a settlement as a dissenting congregation, and sent a request to Mr. Valentine Wightman, then a young Baptist minister of reputation in Rhode Island, to come and be their leader. He came without delay, and in 1705 gathered and organized the First Baptist Church in Groton, which small company was also the first formed Baptist church in Connecticut.

By the gift of William Stark, who was afterwards the first deacon of the church, the young pastor was presented with a house and twenty acres of land, which for several generations became the home of the Wightmans. This parsonage was situated on Stark's Hill, as formerly called, near which the New London and Providence turnpike was opened many years later. The house is still standing after the two hundredth anniversary of the church. The first meeting house of the Baptists was built in 1718, on land owned by Deacon Stark, about half a mile southeasterly from the parsonage,

The school advantages in Old Mystic are now better than can be found in most towns outside the large cities. Formerly the northeastern section of the town including the village was a part of the Burnet's Corners district. In 1851 that section of Groton was incorporated with the sixth school district of Stonington, having its school house already in the village of Old Mystic. By this change, all the village and the adjacent territory was joined in one district. The school has now three departments, but all the grades of the schedule of studies for the town of Stonington are represented. The high school is identical in rank and grade with the three other high schools in Stonington, all having the same schedule of studies, the same tests of scholarship, and pupils in all may graduate and receive a diploma on completion of the course of studies.

on the traveled path known as the Post road, two miles west of the present house of worship. It was a plain, square structure of small dimensions, without paint or embellishments of any kind and never had fireplace or stove for warmth or comfort. But it had a history and memories of gospel sermons and worship that greatly endeared it to the two or three generations by whom it was successively occupied.

Mr. Wightman was of a race and family of preachers and was the great-grandson of Rev. Edward Wightman of Burton-on-Trent, who was the last martyr by fire in England, having been burnt at the stake at Litchfield, April 11, 1612. He was well adapted to the work of pioneer in preaching the gospel, and sowed the seeds from which Baptist churches grew to advocate liberty of conscience. In the days when men, women and children could be thrown into prison for holding a Baptist meeting, he, with his faithful band, maintained the vital points of Christian liberty as well as Baptist faith.

The following statutes were enacted as late as 1723:

"Whatsoever persons shall presume on the Lord's Day to neglect the worship of God in some lawful

congregation, and form themselves into separate companies in private houses; being convicted thereof shall each of them for every such offense forfeit the sum of twenty shillings."

"Whatsoever person not being a lawfully allowed minister of the gospel, shall presume to perform the holy sacraments by administering them to any person or persons whatsoever, and being thereof convicted, shall incur the penalty of ten pounds for every such offense, and suffer corporal punishment by whipping not exceeding thirty lashes for each offense."

Many instances could be cited of those who suffered fines and imprisonment. In the years that have followed we can partially realize the great changes that have taken place in the minds of men. Intolerance has given way to liberality of thought, and independence of action is everywhere permitted, but it should be

mentioned as the first deacon, two others are known to have filled that office, Isaac Lamb and Joseph Culver. Mr. Wightman continued with the church until his death in 1747 closed his long pastorate of forty-two years. A Wightman memorial, erected in 1890, marks his resting place in the Wightman Burial Ground which adjoined the first two houses of worship.

Rev. Daniel Fisk of Rhode Island was called to be his successor. During his ministry began the "great awakening" under the preaching of Whitefield and Davenport, which deeply moved all the churches, and in many the impressions made resulted in divisions. In



VILLAGE GREEN AND CHURCH EDIFICE BUILT IN 1867

remembered that not a truth or principle taught by the early Baptists has been recanted, changed, or overthrown.

Mr. Wightman was greatly favored by having as neighboring ministers of the Standing Order, Ephraim Woodbridge and John Owen, whose liberality towards the Baptists was in marked contrast to the spirit of the times. Wightman and Owen ever labored side by side in accord and in mutual friendship until the death of the former.

Mr. Wightman was in advance of his day and of his own people. He introduced singing as a part of public worship, and to meet the strong opposition to this innovation he published a book advocating its practice. During his pastorate, besides William Stark, before

Baptist churches there were also divisions into open and strict communion, and after various efforts to reconcile these views, at length in 1754, the church was reorganized, adopting open communion.

From this time Timothy Wightman, son of the first pastor, became the leader of the church, and in 1756 was ordained pastor. With him were associated twenty-eight members, and their covenant dating June 28, 1754, is upon the church records which, from that time forward, have been fully preserved. About the year 1765, the First Baptist church of Groton, then the leading church of that faith in the state, as well as the first born, returned to its former practice of strict communion, in consequence of which some of the members

withdrew and formed the Second Baptist church of Groton, sometimes called the Fort Hill church.

A historian tells us that Timothy Wightman was a "man of medium stature and erect form, affable manners, serious deportment and manly hearing, and was nigh a model man." As a preacher he was fearless and faithful. His ministry reached through two great upheavals in the history of our country; the "great awakening" in church life, before referred to, and the revolution that inaugurated our national independence. He taught his people to honor the right, and his church furnished its quota of patriotic blood in defence of liberty. On one occasion two members of his flock who were soldiers, having been allowed to visit their homes and finding a meeting in progress, came at once to the meeting in all their soldierly outfit. On entering they received from the pastor this scriptural greeting and welcome: "And being let go they went to their own company."

Three deacons were ordained during his ministry, John Wightman and Peter Avery in 1757, and Thomas Northrop Niles in 1778. Deacon Peter Avery was a man of decided personality and a leader in church matters. He was loud and strong of speech, but of agreeable manner and reputed wealth. He gave the church one hundred pounds sterling and a silver cup for communion service. He was deacon for fifty years, until his death.

A glimpse of the old-time church singing is here given in the quaint language of the church record:

"Oct ye 3, 1778. Dea Niles moved that somebody should be chosen to set the Psalm, when the church made choice of Br Benadam Gallup, and in his absence Br John Daboll to set the Psalm and likewise voted that they set as near the center of the meeting house as they conveniently can."

"April ye 3, 1779. Br Gallup moved that the church should reconsider a vote of theirs in October appointing him and Br Daboll to tune the Psalm, as he found Br Daboll's gift to be superior to his. Accordingly at Br Gallup's desire they appointed Br Daboll to be first in tuning the Psalm and Br Gallup to assist him."

During Timothy Wightman's ministry there were large additions to the church, which numbered two hundred and fifteen members at the close of his pastorate. In 1790, a second

house of worship was built on the site of the former house. Mr. Wightman's death occurred in 1796 at the age of seventy-seven, in the forty-third year of his pastorate.

An interval of four years followed during which Rev. Reuben Palmer of Montville preached as supply a part of the time, and more than seventy were added to the church. Among others, John Gano Wightman, son of the late pastor, a young man of more than ordinary ability, who had received a classical education at Plainfield Academy, was converted and baptized in 1798 at the age of thirty-one. Soon afterwards he accepted the call of the church to become its pastor and was ordained Aug. 13, 1800.

John Gano Wightman was a logical and fluent speaker, well versed in scripture and a successful minister of Christ. During his pastorate not less than ten seasons of revival were experienced, greatly strengthening the church and repairing the losses by death and removal to cities and villages and to the far west.

A branch church was formed in 1831 as the Third Baptist church of Groton, afterwards known as the Mariner's church, located west of the river at Mystic, then called Portersville.

During his pastorate the following were ordained deacons: Benadam Gallup in 1800, Samuel Lamb and Sands Fish in 1810, Stanton P. Babcock in 1828, and Coddington Colver and James C. Lamb in 1838.

The church was blessed with faithful laymen as well as officers. Joseph Colver, a lineal descendant of Gov. Winthrop of Connecticut, was a judicious and trusted helper, and a tower of strength to the church in his day, and in faithful attendance his record is without a parallel. He carefully kept a diary and according to its pages he was absent from Lord's day service only twice in forty years. Two of his grandsons have filled important positions in the Baptist ministry, Rev. Palmer G. Wightman whose name appears later as pastor of this church, and Rev. Joseph C. Wightman an eminent scholar and divine.

Another valuable contributor to the spiritual life of the church was "Old Quash," as he was commonly called. Quash Williams was a

slave in early life and never learned to read, but he was mighty in the Scriptures and knew them better than many who teach them as their sacred calling. He could say with David, "Thy word have I hid in my heart." His gift of exhortation was wonderful. His appeals were full of the lively imagery and fervid emotion peculiar to his race combined with such feeling and sensible application of divine truth, and expressed in voice and manner so effective that his audience could rarely refrain from tears. His counsels were a valuable help to many, and in after years the memory of his services prompted the erection of a monument at his grave.

lives of these men and their influence upon the people of their day. To them, with their unfeigned love of the truth, their piety, their sturdy maintenance of Baptist principles in face of all opposition, and to their wise and diligent leadership is due the impressions which made all this wide section of country become special Baptist ground. That such is the fact, the five flourishing Baptist churches in the town of Groton, and five more in the adjoining towns of Stonington and North Stonington are continual witnesses.

After the death of John Gano Wightman, Mr. B. F. Hedden, a member of the Fort Hill church, was called to the pastorate, and was ordained in April, 1842. During his short stay of about one year the church seems to have been unusually active, and a change of the location of the meeting house was advocated.

On the twenty-second of February, 1843, a vote was passed to remove to Mystic, as Old Mystic was then called, whenever a suitable house of worship should be erected at that place. In the same month a branch church which had been maintained for a time at Ledyard was constituted an independent church. Also on the sixteenth of March a delegation from this church assisted in a council at Groton Heights in establishing the present Groton Heights church. In April, 1842, Stephen Peckham, Avery Gallup and Daniel Chipman were ordained deacons.

Mr. Hedden was succeeded in 1843 by Rev. Charles C. Lewis who remained with the church less than one year. In the meantime the site for a new house of worship was secured, located still within the town of Groton, where the present house stands, and a new church was built, which was dedicated February 22, 1844.

The old house in Groton remained standing for a time and some were unwilling to give it up as a place of worship, and meetings were frequently held within its hallowed walls. Like its predecessor it made no outward pretension to architectural beauty, but was a square, barn-like structure without spire or steeple or even a chimney. The pipe from its one stove after crossing the room horizontally found its way



PRESENT BAPTIST CHURCH

The first Sunday school connected with the church was organized in 1827. Though not having means of conducting that work in the manner of the present day, it had in view the fundamental object of gaining and imparting a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, in which it was eminently successful.

Mr. Wightman died in 1841, having served the church as pastor forty one years. With his death closed a remarkable series of pastorates by father, son, and grandson, covering a period of one hundred and twenty-six years. It is impossible to justly review the history of this church without carefully considering the

out through a window, where a pane of glass once had been. It had the square family pews of those times, each one completely walled in by a high board partition in which the older occupants sat where they could see the preacher, but the children were placed with backs toward the pulpit, and their view was mostly confined to the inside walls of their prison, relieved only by the stern countenances of their elders. Vivid recollections now come of services in that house when the sound of the preaching seemed something wonderful; and when the hymn was sung by singers in the gallery, wholly out of sight from the children's place in the cavernous pew, after vainly trying to find where that sound came from, the inevitable conclusion was reached that it came from heaven. Sometimes during service a bright-eyed squirrel would come a little way out from his hiding place and all unmoved by his surroundings, listen for a short time to the profound preaching, then with a scamper retire to his own haunts.

The interior work of the house was more highly finished, with hand wrought panels and mouldings, and the front of the lofty pulpit with much carved work, on all of which no paint was ever used, but it remained in the natural color and finish of the wood. But the most striking feature of that room was its huge pear-shaped sounding board, hanging by a single rod of iron directly over the minister as he stood up to preach. A childish fear amounting almost to torture was continuously present that at some dreadful moment that mighty thing would drop and utterly extinguish the poor preacher. Whether the sounding board greatly increased the volume of the speaker's voice is a matter of doubt, but in this case it was sure evidence of the regard a loving people had for a fatherly pastor, for in building that house in the later years of Timothy Wightman's pastorate, when his speech had lost some of the strength and vigor of youth, this device was added to increase the sound, that all might be able to hear his voice. No thought entered their true hearts of exchanging his counsels for those of another, even

though the marks of time and weight of years were apparent in waning strength and voice. Little wonder that those who had been worshippers in that house were unwilling to give it up, for they had memories that stirred their hearts, and had an abiding affection for that house in its beautiful retired place by the fragrant forest, and for the quiet church yard where their loved and lost were laid to their long rest. There often indeed

"The sounding aisles of the dim woods rang  
To the anthem of the free."

Rev. Cyrus Miner was the first pastor to occupy the new house, beginning his services in April following the dedication. He remained only one year and was succeeded by William C. Walker, who was called by this church to his first pastorate in April, 1845. Though young, his loving disposition, genuine good will, and zeal for his Master soon won to him the hearts of his people. He was ordained in June at the session of the Stonington Union Association, which was held with the church that year.

During his pastorate of five years, the first additions were made to the church on its new ground. The Sunday school received special attention from him, and from that time was made more attractive and important as a part of church work. Ill-health, which prevented continued effort in public speaking, led to his resignation. The minister's support in those days does not now seem to have been a gilded attraction, as the records show the amount to have been but three hundred dollars per annum, and even this sum was with difficulty raised and not always promptly paid.

Rev. James Squier was the next pastor for about one year. During his stay an increase of interest was manifest and extra meetings were held. Among others who assisted in the services was Rev. Erastus Miner whose preaching greatly interested many, and who was eventually called to be the next pastor. The church gained in numbers during the earlier part of his ministry, but later there was dissatisfaction and it grew so great that the church was divided and separate meetings

were held. This state of things continued for a time after Mr. Miner had severed his connection with the church.

Rev. John E. Wood was next called and came to his duties with a plan for laying aside all differences and reuniting the church on common ground, which under his discreet leadership as pastor was happily effected. His active career and efforts awakened renewed interest in all church work. The Sunday school was reinvigorated and by his planning, the Sunday School Convention to the Stoning-

extra work of that winter Mr. Wightman was greatly assisted by Elder Jabez Swan of evangelistic renown, the two working in perfect accord with each other and with the church. Though no other revival of like power was experienced, many more were afterward added to the church. During the twelve years of his pastorate two hundred and twenty-four new members were received, and the membership of the church reached the highest point in its history, having been two hundred and ninety-six in 1875.

With increased membership and larger congregations the house of worship was found too small for the needs of the church, and it was at length decided to build a new house, which was erected on the site of the old one and dedicated in October, 1867. The Sunday school was at this period under the superintendence of Amos B. Taylor and continued to be for nearly twenty years, and was larger than at any time since its formation, numbering over two hundred scholars. By the bequest of Zerviah Wightman, daughter of Rev. John Gano Wightman, the church came into possession of its present parsonage and a considerable sum of money as a fund for the support of gospel preaching. In 1867, Thomas H. Vincent was appointed deacon, and in 1872, Allan Stevenson, Nehemiah M. Gallup and Benjamin B. Hewitt were also appointed to that office. Mr. Wightman resigned his pastorate in 1876, having been greatly instrumental in building up the church in numbers, influence and efficiency.

BAPTIST PARSONAGE, OLDEST IN AMERICA

ton Union Association was established, and the first meeting was held with this church in 1858. He resigned in November, 1860, and was followed by Rev. Edgar A. Hewitt, who continued with the church three years. By a bequest of Mrs. Sally Gallup the church received a fund of about fourteen hundred dollars.

Soon after the resignation of Mr. Hewitt, Rev. Palmer G. Wightman, grandson of Rev. John Gano Wightman, accepted a call to the pastorate and commenced his labors upon the field of his fathers in June, 1864. He was well fitted for the position, and began his pastoral work with unwavering faith, active zeal and untiring effort. The church responded to the spirit and earnestness manifested by him, and there began a harvest of accessions to the church. During the winter of 1865 and 1866, meetings were continued nearly every evening for more than three months, and within that time eighty-eight were baptised. In the

Rev. Eli Dewhurst succeeded to the pastorate the same year in which Mr. Wightman resigned, and continued with the church five years. During that time an effort was made to clear the church of indebtedness upon its house of worship, and by the sacrifices of many who contributed large sums for that purpose the whole amount was raised and paid. Mr. Dewhurst was followed by Mr. John Richardson who was ordained by the church, and remained a little more than a year. During his pastoral term a number were received into the church. Rev. Homer A. King became pastor in July, 1883, remaining also a little more



than a year, and was in turn followed, January, 1885, by Rev. A. J. Wilcox who remained only a few months.

In September of the latter year Rev. A. J. Chandler was called to the pastorate. With him an important revival season was experienced, in which additions were made to the church, and it was greatly quickened in spiritual thought and life. In 1894 some changes were made in the interior of the house of worship, rendering the whole much better adapted to all the needs of church work. Three deacons were chosen in 1887, Simeon Gallup, William H. Lamphere, and Amos D. Turner. Mr. Chandler resigned in 1895, closing ten years of pastoral labor, and was succeeded in November of that year by Rev. Dryden W. Phelps, who continued pastor about three and one-half years.

A legacy of one thousand dollars, the gift of Mrs. Julia A. Langworthy, was received by the church in 1899. In December of that year Rev. Henry W. Wilson accepted a call to the church, and began a pastorate full of encouragement and promise, which, however, was brought to a sudden close by his untimely death June 5th, 1902. About forty were received into the church during his labors.

Mr. Wilson was followed by Rev. Herbert B. Hutchins, who began his pastoral work in November of the same year.

In June, 1904, the Stonington Union Association held its one hundred and thirty-second anniversary with the church. At that session the association presented the church a bronze memorial tablet "commemorating the found-

ing of this, the first Baptist church of Connecticut in 1705, and the maintenance by it of the standard of Religious Liberty, and the self-sacrificing devotion of Valentine Wightman, its founder, Timothy Wightman, his son, and John Gano Wightman, his grandson, successively its ministers for one hundred and twenty-six years."

The year 1905 closed the second century of the existence of the church. In August of that year exercises were held commemorating that event, beginning on Sunday, August 6th, and continuing until Aug. 9th. At the public services held each day, addresses were delivered by prominent speakers from abroad in connection with other appropriate exercises. After the address on Wednesday, Aug. 9th, the bi-centennial exercises were concluded with a banquet and social reunion.

At the close of the second century of church life the number of members is two hundred and two. Since 1754, the earliest date from which a continuous record of membership can now be traced, to the present time, twelve hundred and eighty-seven members have been enrolled. Twenty-eight ministers of the gospel have gone out from this membership to their work in all parts of the land. If imbued with the spirit of the Divine Master, and the courage and devotion of some of the early fathers whose career has been here reviewed, another century may show a powerful influence for good from their labors also.

Mr. Hutchins closed his pastorate in March, 1907, and was succeeded by Rev. J. M. Olmstead, in November of the same year.









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